

BY
CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. K. BROWNE.

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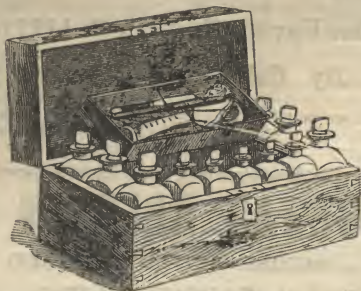
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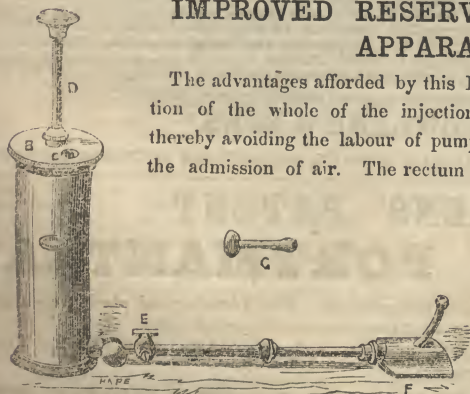
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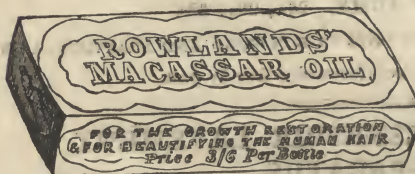
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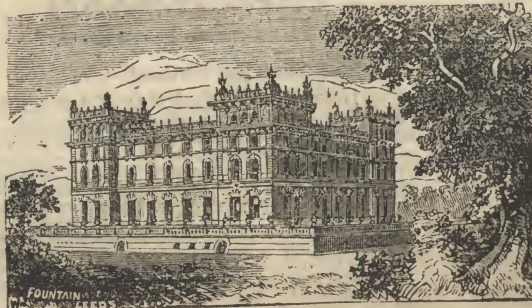
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Table Forks, per dozen	1	10	0	2	0	0	2	16	0
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Table Spoons	1	10	0	2	0	0	2	18	0
Dessert ditto	1	0	0	1	10	0	2	2	0
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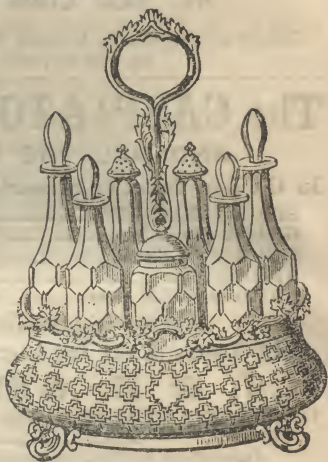
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HANDSOME BRONZED FENDERS, 10s. AND 12s. 6d. EACH.

JAY'S SPONSALIA,

246, REGENT STREET.

AS many Ladies who honour the Messrs. JAY & Co. with their patronage have expressed a desire to be supplied by them with

COLOURED MILLINERY, MANTLES, EMBROIDERIES, &c.

when the period for the use of Mourning Apparel shall have expired, they have been induced, at this suggestion, to meet the exigency by opening the above Establishment *opposite Hanover Chapel*.

Messrs. JAY & Co. propose also to supply a want which has long been acknowledged by Families, and to provide every necessary appointment for a Lady on her Marriage in

DRESSES, MILLINERY, LACE, MANTLES, FLOWERS, &c.

The speciality of this undertaking, it is respectfully intimated, will ensure for the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, greater advantages than can be offered elsewhere.

The latest Parisian Fashions in **MILLINERY, &c.**, will be continually supplied through Continental Agents.

A Saloon is exclusively set apart for **LINGERIE**, in which Ladies will be waited upon by experienced *Artistes*; and Families about to proceed to India or the Colonies will find every requisite for the most approved outfits, and at moderate charges.

JAY'S SPONSALIA,

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OPPOSITE HANOVER CHAPEL.

CURES (without physic) of **CONSTIPATION, INDIGESTION (Dyspepsia),** Flatulency, Phlegm, all nervous, bilious, and liver complaints, dysentery, diarrhoea, acidity, palpitation, heartburn, headaches, debility, despondency, cramps, spasms, nausea, and sickness at the stomach, sinking, fits, cough, asthma, bronchitis, consumption, also children's complaints, by

DU BARRY'S DELICIOUS REVALENTA ARABICA FOOD,

Which restores health without purging, inconvenience, or expense, as it saves fifty times its cost in other remedies. Recommended by Drs. Ure, Shorland, Harvey, Campbell, Gattiker, Wurzer, Ingram, and 50,000 other respectable persons, whose health has been perfectly restored by it after all other means of cure had failed.

A few out of 50,000 cures are here given:—

Cure, No. 71, of dyspepsia, from the Right Hon. the LORD STUART DE DECIES,—“I have derived considerable benefit from Du Barry's Revalenta Arabica Food, and consider it due to yourselves and the public to authorise the publication of these lines.

STUART DE DECIES.”

From the DOWAGER COUNTESS OF CASTLE-STUART.

Cure 52,612.—Rosstrevor, County of Down, Ireland, 9 December, 1854.

“The DOWAGER COUNTESS OF CASTLESTUART feels induced, in the interest of suffering humanity, to state that Du Barry's excellent Revalenta Arabica Food has cured her, after all Medicines had failed, of Indigestion, bile, great nervousness and irritability of many years' standing. This Food deserves the confidence of all sufferers, and may be considered a real blessing. Enquiries will be cheerfully answered.”

Cure No. 49,832.—“Fifty years' indescribable agony from dyspepsia, nervousness, asthma, cough, constipation, flatulency, spasms, sickness at the stomach and vomiting, have been removed by Du Barry's excellent food.

MARIA JOLLY, Wortham Ling, near Diss, Norfolk.”

In canisters, 1 lb., 2s. 9d.; 2 lb., 4s. 6d.; 5 lb., 11s.; 12 lb., 22s.; the 12 lb. carriage free on receipt of post-office order. BARRY DU BARRY & CO., 77, Regent-street, London: FORTNUM, MASON, & CO., 182, Piccadilly; ABBS & CO., 60, Gracechurch-street.

“Casa Pausilippo, Pisa in Tuscany, 9th March, 1856.

“LORD VISCOUNT CHUCK begs to inform Messrs. Barry du Barry & Co. that he has been perfectly cured of gout, headache (migraine), loss of memory, &c., by their invaluable Revalenta Arabica Food, having tried for the last ten years all other remedies for these maladies without avail. Messrs. Du Barry are at perfect liberty to make any use of this letter they think fit.”

“Viech's Hotel, Edinburgh, March 15th, 1856.

Messrs. Barry du Barry & Co.,—Gentlemen—For the last ten years and more I had been suffering continually from rheumatism in the head, and being advised by my friends, I have taken a 10lb. canister of your Farina, which has cured me most effectually, as I have had no return of the malady for more than a year. Pray make any use of this you please, and permit me to subscribe myself,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM PRINGLE, Captain, Ceylon Rifles.”

No. 4208.—“Eight years' dyspepsia, nervousness, debility with cramps, spasms, and nausea, have been effectually removed by Du Barry's health-restoring food. I shall be happy to answer any inquiries.

“Rev. JOHN W. FLAVELL, Riddington Rectory, Norfolk.”

PARASOLS.

W. & J. SANGSTER



BE^G respectfully to inform the Nobility and Gentry that they are prepared to offer to their notice, under the name of the PERSIAN, the most novel Parasol ever manufactured in this country, and for which they have just obtained Her Majesty's Letters Patent.

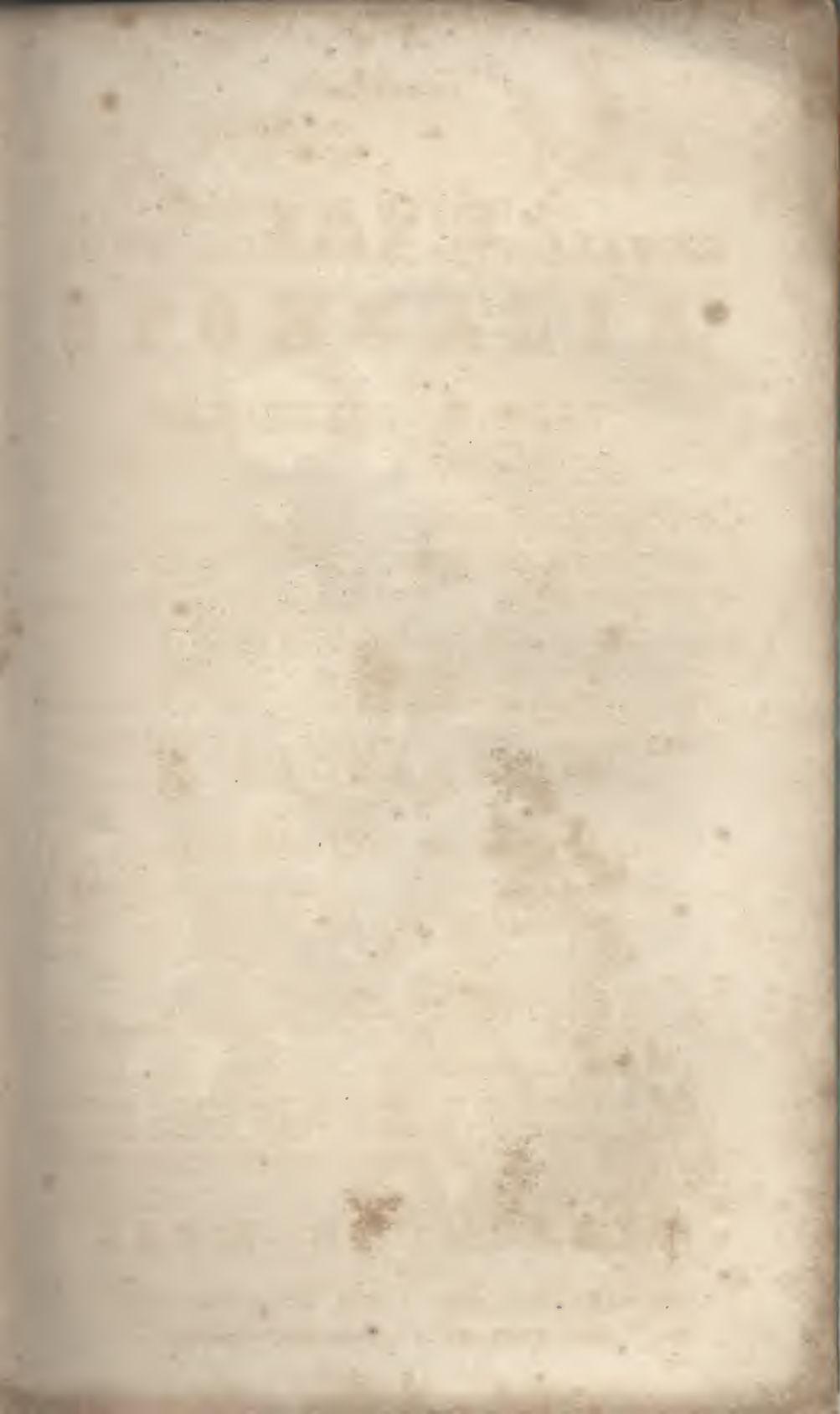
These Parasols are made of a peculiar silk fabric, without any seam whatever, and are ornamented with Oriental patterns in the richest colours, warranted fast.

The “Persian” will be found to be in every respect the most unique and elegant Parasol ever offered to the public.

They may be purchased wholesale of their sole Licensees, Messrs. MORLAND & SON, Eastcheap, and of the Patentees.

W. & J. S. beg to call attention to their SILK UMBRELLAS ON FOX'S PATENT PARAGON FRAMES, which they undertake to repair gratis, if necessary, when purchased at either of their Establishments.

140, REGENT STREET; 10, ROYAL EXCHANGE;
94, FLEET STREET; 75, CHEAPSIDE.

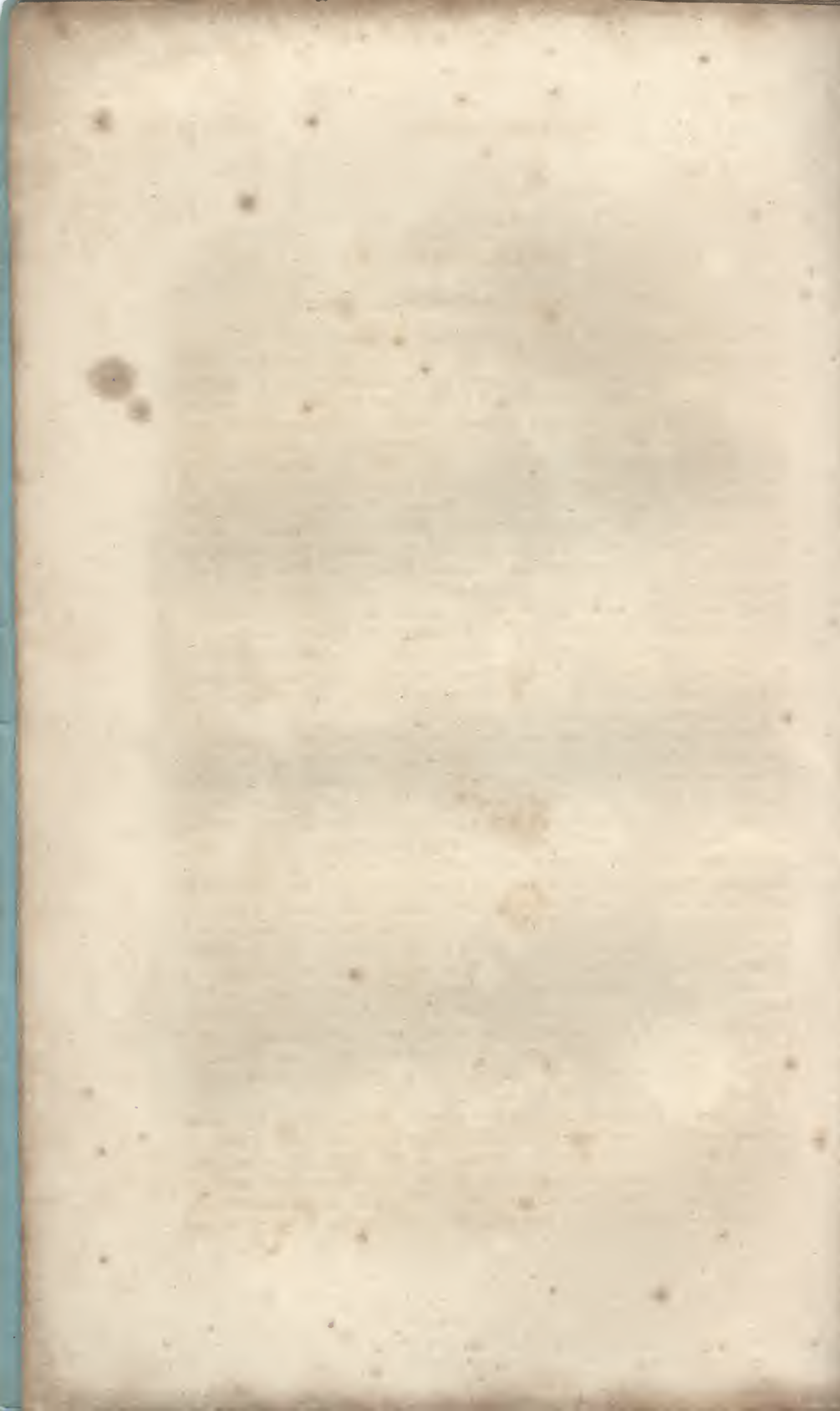




M. & W. P. Fintunich



The Ferry



CHAPTER XV.

MRS. FLINTWINCH HAS ANOTHER DREAM.

THE debilitated old house in the city, wrapped in its mantle of soot, and leaning heavily on the crutches that had partaken of its decay and worn out with it, never knew a healthy or a cheerful interval, let what would betide. If the sun ever touched it, it was but with a ray, and that was gone in half an hour; if the moonlight ever fell upon it, it was only to put a few patches on its doleful cloak, and make it look more wretched. The stars, to be sure, coldly watched it when the nights and the smoke were clear enough; and all bad weather stood by it with a rare fidelity. You should alike find rain, hail, frost, and thaw lingering in that dismal enclosure, when they had vanished from other places; and as to snow, you should see it there for weeks, long after it had changed from yellow to black, slowly weeping away its grimy life. The place had no other adherents. As to street noises, the rumbling of wheels in the lane merely rushed in at the gateway in going past, and rushed out again: making the listening Mistress Affery feel as if she were deaf, and recovered the sense of hearing by instantaneous flashes. So with whistling, singing, talking, laughing, and all pleasant human sounds. They leaped the gap in a moment, and went upon their way.

The varying light of fire and candle in Mrs. Clennam's room made the greatest change that ever broke the dead monotony of the spot. In her two long narrow windows, the fire shone sullenly all day, and sullenly all night. On rare occasions, it flashed up passionately, as she did; but for the most part it was suppressed, like her, and preyed upon itself evenly and slowly. During many hours of the short winter days, however, when it was dusk there early in the afternoon, changing distortions of herself in her wheeled chair, of Mr. Flintwinch with his wry neck, of Mistress Affery coming and going, would be thrown upon the house wall that was over the gateway, and would hover there like shadows from a great magic lantern. As the room-ridden invalid settled for the night, these would gradually disappear: Mistress Affery's magnified shadow always flitting about, last, until it finally glided away into the air, as though she were off upon a witch-excursion. Then the solitary light would burn unchangingly, until it burned pale before the dawn, and at last died under the breath of Mistress Affery, as her shadow descended on it from the witch-region of sleep.

Strange, if the little sick-room fire were in effect a beacon fire, summoning some one, and that the most unlikely some one in the world, to the spot that *must* be come to. Strange, if the little sick-room light were in effect a watch-light, burning in that place every night until an appointed event should be watched out! Which of the vast multitude of travellers, under the sun and the stars, climbing the dusty hills and

toiling along the weary plains, journeying by land and journeying by sea, coming and going so strangely, to meet and to act and re-act on one another, which of the host may, with no suspicion of the journey's end, be travelling surely hither?

Time shall show us. The post of honor and the post of shame, the general's station and the drummer's, a peer's statue in Westminster Abbey and a seaman's hammock in the bosom of the deep, the mitre and the workhouse, the woolsack and the gallows, the throne and the guillotine—the travellers to all are on the great high-road; but it has wonderful divergences, and only Time shall show us whither each traveller is bound.

On a wintry afternoon at twilight, Mrs. Flintwinch, having been heavy all day, dreamed this dream:

She thought she was in the kitchen getting the kettle ready for tea, and was warming herself with her feet upon the fender and the skirt of her gown tucked up, before the collapsed fire in the middle of the grate, bordered on either hand by a deep cold black ravine. She thought that as she sat thus, musing upon the question, whether life was not for some people a rather dull invention, she was frightened by a sudden noise behind her. She thought that she had been similarly frightened once last week, and that the noise was of a mysterious kind—a sound of rustling, and of three or four quick beats like a rapid step; while a shock or tremble was communicated to her heart, as if the step had shaken the floor, or even as if she had been touched by some awful hand. She thought that this revived within her, certain old fears of hers that the house was haunted; and that she flew up the kitchen stairs, without knowing how she got up, to be nearer company.

Mistress Affery thought that on reaching the hall, she saw the door of her liege lord's office standing open, and the room empty. That she went to the ripped-up window, in the little room by the street door, to connect her palpitating heart, through the glass, with living things beyond and outside the haunted house. That she then saw, on the wall over the gateway, the shadows of the two clever ones in conversation above. That she then went upstairs with her shoes in her hand, partly to be near the clever ones as a match for most ghosts, and partly to hear what they were talking about.

"None of your nonsense with me," said Mr. Flintwinch. "I won't take it from you."

Mrs. Flintwinch dreamed that she stood behind the door, which was just ajar, and most distinctly heard her husband say these bold words.

"Flintwinch," returned Mrs. Clennam, in her usual strong low voice, "there is a demon of anger in you. Guard against it."

"I don't care whether there's one or a dozen," said Mr. Flintwinch, forcibly suggesting in his tone that the higher number was nearer the mark. "If there was fifty, they should all say, None of your nonsense with me, I won't take it from you.—I'd make 'em say it, whether they liked it or not."

"What have I done, you wrathful man?" her strong voice asked.

"Done?" said Mr. Flintwinch. "Dropped down upon me."

"If you mean, remonstrated with you——"

"Don't put words in my mouth that I don't mean," said Jeremiah, sticking to his figurative expression with tenacious and impenetrable obstinacy: "I mean dropped down upon me."

"I remonstrated with you," she began again, "because——"

"I won't have it!" cried Jeremiah. "You dropped down upon me."

"I dropped down upon you, then, you ill-conditioned man," (Jeremiah chuckled at having forced her to adopt his phrase), "for having been needlessly significant to Arthur that morning. I have a right to complain of it as almost a breach of confidence. You did not mean it——"

"I won't have it!" interposed the contradictory Jeremiah, flinging back the concession. "I did mean it."

"I suppose I must leave you to speak in soliloquy if you choose," she replied, after a pause that seemed an angry one. "It is useless my addressing myself to a rash and headstrong old man who has a set purpose not to hear me."

"Now, I won't take that from you either," said Jeremiah. "I have no such purpose. I have told you I did mean it. Do you wish to know why I meant it, you rash and headstrong old woman?"

"After all, you only restore me my own words," she said, struggling with her indignation. "Yes."

"This is why, then. Because you hadn't cleared his father to him, and you ought to have done it. Because, before you went into any tantrum about yourself, who are——"

"Hold there, Flintwinch!" she cried out in a changed voice: "you may go a word too far."

The old man seemed to think so. There was another pause, and he had altered his position in the room, when he spoke again more mildly:

"I was going to tell you why it was. Because, before you took your own part, I thought you ought to have taken the part of Arthur's father. Arthur's father! I had no particular love for Arthur's father. I served Arthur's father's uncle, in this house, when Arthur's father was not much above me—was poorer as far as his pocket went—and when his uncle might as soon have left me his heir as have left him. He starved in the parlor, and I starved in the kitchen; that was the principal difference in our positions; there was not much more than a flight of break-neck stairs between us. I never took to him in those times; I don't know that I ever took to him greatly at any time. He was an undecided, irresolute chap, who had had everything but his orphan life scared out of him when he was young. And when he brought you home here, the wife his uncle had named for him, I didn't need to look at you twice (you were a good-looking woman at that time) to know who'd be master. You have stood of your own strength ever since. Stand of your own strength now. Don't lean against the dead."

"I do *not*—as you call it—lean against the dead."

"But you had a mind to do it, if I had submitted," growled Jeremiah, "and that's why you drop down upon me. You can't forget that I didn't submit. I suppose you are astonished that I should consider it worth my while to have justice done to Arthur's father? Hey?"

It doesn't matter whether you answer or not, because I know you are, and you know you are. Come, then, I'll tell you how it is. I may be a bit of an oddity in point of temper, but this is my temper—I can't let anybody have entirely their own way. You are a determined woman, and a clever woman; and when you see your purpose before you, nothing will turn you from it. Who knows that better than I do?"

"Nothing will turn me from it, Flintwinch, when I have justified it to myself. Add that."

"Justified it to yourself? I said you were the most determined woman on the face of the earth (or I meant to say so), and if you are determined to justify any object you entertain, of course you'll do it."

"Man! I justify myself by the authority of these Books," she cried, with stern emphasis, and appearing from the sound that followed to strike the dead-weight of her arm upon the table.

"Never mind that," returned Jeremiah, calmly, "we won't enter into that question at present. However that may be, you carry out your purposes, and you make everything go down before them. Now, I won't go down before them. I have been faithful to you, and useful to you, and I am attached to you. But I can't consent, and I won't consent, and I never did consent, and I never will consent, to be lost in you. Swallow up everybody else, and welcome. The peculiarity of my temper is, ma'am, that I won't be swallowed up alive."

Perhaps this had originally been the mainspring of the understanding between them. Deserving thus much of force of character in Mr. Flintwinch, perhaps Mrs. Clennam had deemed alliance with him worth her while.

"Enough and more than enough of the subject," said she gloomily.

"Unless you drop down upon me again," returned the persistent Flintwinch, "and then you must expect to hear of it again."

Mistress Affery dreamed that the figure of her lord here began walking up and down the room, as if to cool his spleen, and that she ran away; but that, as he did not issue forth when she had stood listening and trembling in the shadowy hall a little time, she crept up stairs again, impelled as before by ghosts and curiosity, and once more cowered outside the door.

"Please to light the candle, Flintwinch," Mrs. Clennam was saying, apparently wishing to draw him back into their usual tone. "It is nearly time for tea. Little Dorrit is coming, and will find me in the dark."

Mr. Flintwinch lighted the candle briskly, and said, as he put it down upon the table:

"What are you going to do with Little Dorrit? Is she to come to work here for ever? To come to tea here for ever? To come backwards and forwards here, in the same way, for ever?"

"How can you talk about 'for ever' to a maimed creature like me? Are we not all cut down like the grass of the field, and was not I shorn by the scythe many years ago; since when, I have been lying here, waiting to be gathered into the barn?"

"Aye, aye! But since you have been lying here—not near dead—

nothing like it—numbers of children and young people, blooming women, strong men, and what not, have been cut down and carried; and still here are you, you see, not much changed after all. Your time and mine may be a long one yet. When I say for ever, I mean (though I am not poetical) through all our time.” Mr. Flintwinch gave this explanation with great calmness, and calmly waited for an answer.

“So long as Little Dorrit is quiet, and industrious, and stands in need of the slight help I can give her, and deserves it; so long, I suppose, unless she withdraws of her own act, she will continue to come here, I being spared.”

“Nothing more than that?” said Flintwinch, stroking his mouth and chin.

“What should there be more than that! What could there be more than that!” she ejaculated, in her sternly wondering way.

Mrs. Flintwinch dreamed, that, for the space of a minute or two, they remained looking at each other with the candle between them, and that she somehow derived an impression that they looked at each other fixedly.

“Do you happen to know, Mrs. Clennam,” Affery’s liege lord then demanded in a much lower voice, and with an amount of expression that seemed quite out of proportion to the simple purpose of his words, “where she lives?”

“No.”

“Would you—now, would you like to know?” said Jeremiah, with a pounce as if he had sprung upon her.

“If I cared to know, I should know already. Could I not have asked her, any day?”

“Then you don’t care to know?”

“I do not.”

Mr. Flintwinch, having expelled a long significant breath, said with his former emphasis, “For I have accidentally—mind!—found out.”

“Wherever she lives,” said Mrs. Clennam, speaking in one unmodulated hard voice, and separating her words as distinctly as if she were reading them off from separate bits of metal that she took up one by one, “she has made a secret of it, and she shall always keep her secret from me.”

“After all, perhaps you would rather not have known the fact, any how?” said Jeremiah; and he said it with a twist, as if his words had come out of him in his own wry shape.

“Flintwinch,” said his mistress and partner, flashing into a sudden energy that made Affery start, “why do you goad me? Look round this room. If it is any compensation for my long confinement within these narrow limits—not that I complain of being afflicted; you know I never complain of that—if it is any compensation to me for my long confinement to this room, that while I am shut up from all pleasant change, I am also shut up from the knowledge of some things that I may prefer to avoid knowing, why should you, of all men, grudge me that relief?”

“I don’t grudge it to you,” returned Jeremiah.

“Then say no more. Say no more. Let Little Dorrit keep her

secret from me, and do you keep it from me also. Let her come and go, unobserved and unquestioned. Let me suffer, and let me have what alleviation belongs to my condition. Is it so much, that you torment me like an evil spirit?"

"I asked you a question. That's all."

"I have answered it. So, say no more. Say no more." Here the sound of the wheeled chair was heard upon the floor, and Affery's bell rang with a hasty jerk.

More afraid of her husband at the moment than of the mysterious sound in the kitchen, Affery crept away as lightly and as quickly as she could, descended the kitchen stairs almost as rapidly as she had ascended them, resumed her seat before the fire, tucked up her skirt again, and finally threw her apron over her head. Then the bell rang once more, and then once more, and then kept on ringing; in despite of which importunate summons, Affery still sat behind her apron, recovering her breath.

At last Mr. Flintwinch came shuffling down the staircase into the hall, muttering and calling "Affery woman!" all the way. Affery still remaining behind her apron, he came stumbling down the kitchen stairs, candle in hand, sidled up to her, twitched her apron off, and roused her.

"O Jeremiah!" cried Affery, waking. "What a start you gave me!"

"What have you been doing, woman?" enquired Jeremiah.

"You've been rung for, fifty times."

"O Jeremiah," said Mistress Affery, "I have been a-dreaming!"

Reminded of her former achievement in that way, Mr. Flintwinch held the candle to her head, as if he had some idea of lighting her up for the illumination of the kitchen.

"Don't you know it's her tea-time?" he demanded, with a vicious grin, and giving one of the legs of Mistress Affery's chair a kick.

"Jeremiah? Tea-time? I don't know what's come to me. But I got such a dreadful turn, Jeremiah, before I went—off a-dreaming, that I think it must be that."

"Yoogh! Sleepy-Head!" said Mr. Flintwinch, "what are you talking about?"

"Such a strange noise, Jeremiah, and such a curious movement. In the kitchen here—just here."

Jeremiah held up his light and looked at the blackened ceiling, held down his light and looked at the damp stone floor, turned round with his light and looked about at the spotted and blotched walls.

"Rats, cats, water, drains," said Jeremiah.

Mistress Affery negatived each with a shake of her head. "No, Jeremiah; I have felt it before. I have felt it up-stairs, and once on the staircase as I was going from her room to ours in the night—a rustle and a sort of trembling touch behind me."

"Affery, my woman," said Mr. Flintwinch, grimly, after advancing his nose to that lady's lips as a test for the detection of spirituous liquors, "if you don't get tea pretty quick, old woman, you'll become sensible of a rustle and a touch that'll send you flying to the other end of the kitchen."

This prediction stimulated Mrs. Flintwinch to bestir herself, and to

hasten up-stairs to Mrs. Clennam's chamber. But, for all that, she now began to entertain a settled conviction that there was something wrong in the gloomy house. Henceforth, she was never at peace in it after daylight departed; and never went up or down-stairs in the dark without having her apron over her head, lest she should see something.

What with these ghostly apprehensions, and her singular dreams, Mrs. Flintwinch fell that evening into a haunted state of mind, from which it may be long before this present narrative deseries any trace of her recovery. In the vagueness and indistinctness of all her new experiences and perceptions, as everything about her was mysterious to herself, she began to be mysterious to others; and became as difficult to be made out to anybody's satisfaction, as she found the house and everything in it difficult to make out to her own.

She had not yet finished preparing Mrs. Clennam's tea, when the soft knock came to the door which always announced Little Dorrit. Mistress Affery looked on at Little Dorrit taking off her homely bonnet in the hall, and at Mr. Flintwinch scraping his jaws and contemplating her in silence, as expecting some wonderful consequence to ensue which would frighten her out of her five wits or blow them all three to pieces.

After tea, there came another knock at the door, announcing Arthur. Mistress Affery went down to let him in, and he said on entering, "Affery, I am glad it's you. I want to ask you a question." Affery immediately replied, "For goodness sake don't ask me nothing, Arthur! I am frightened out of one half of my life, and dreamed out of the other. Don't ask me nothing! I don't know which is which or what is what!"—and immediately started away from him, and came near him no more.

Mistress Affery having no taste for reading, and no sufficient light for needlework in the subdued room, supposing her to have the inclination, now sat every night in the dimness from which she had momentarily emerged on the evening of Arthur Clennam's return, occupied with crowds of wild speculations and suspicions respecting her mistress, and her husband, and the noises in the house. When the ferocious devotional exercises were engaged in, these speculations would distract Mistress Affery's eyes towards the door, as if she expected some dark form to appear at those propitious moments, and make the party one too many.

Otherwise, Affery never said or did anything to attract the attention of the two clever ones towards her in any marked degree, except on certain occasions, generally at about the quiet hours towards bed-time, when she would suddenly dart out of her dim corner, and whisper with a face of terror, to Mr. Flintwinch reading the paper near Mrs. Clennam's little table:

"There, Jeremiah! Now! What's that noise!"

Then the noise, if there were any, would have ceased, and Mr. Flintwinch would snarl, turning upon her as if she had cut him down that moment against his will, "Affery, old woman, you shall have a dose, old woman, such a dose! You have been dreaming again!"

CHAPTER XVI.

NOBODY'S WEAKNESS.

THE time being come for the renewal of his acquaintance with the Meagles family, Clennam, pursuant to contract made between himself and Mr. Meagles, within the precincts of Bleeding Heart Yard, turned his face on a certain Saturday towards Twickenham, where Mr. Meagles had a cottage-residence of his own. The weather being fine and dry, and any English road abounding in interest for him who had been so long away, he sent his valise on by the coach, and set out to walk. A walk was in itself a new enjoyment to him, and one that had rarely diversified his life afar off.

He went by Fulham and Putney, for the pleasure of strolling over the heath. It was bright and shining there; and when he found himself so far on his road to Twickenham, he found himself a long way on his road to a number of airier and less substantial destinations. They had risen before him fast, in the healthful exercise and the pleasant road. It is not easy to walk alone in the country without musing upon something. And he had plenty of unsettled subjects to meditate upon, though he had been walking to the Land's End.

First, there was the subject seldom absent from his mind, the question what he was to do henceforth in life; to what occupation he should devote himself, and in what direction he had best seek it. He was far from rich, and every day of indecision and inaction made his inheritance a source of greater anxiety to him. As often as he began to consider how to increase this inheritance, or to lay it by, so often his misgiving that there was some one with an unsatisfied claim upon his justice, returned; and that alone was a subject to outlast the longest walk. Again, there was the subject of his relations with his mother, which were now upon an equable and peaceful but never confidential footing, and whom he saw several times a week. Little Dorrit was a leading and a constant subject: for the circumstances of his life, united to those of her own story, presented the little creature to him as the only person between whom and himself there were ties of innocent reliance on one hand, and affectionate protection on the other; ties of compassion, respect, unselfish interest, gratitude, and pity. Thinking of her, and of the possibility of her father's release from prison by the unbarring hand of death—the only change of circumstance he could foresee that might enable him to be such a friend to her as he wished to be, by altering her whole manner of life, smoothing her rough road, and giving her a home—he regarded her, in that perspective, as his adopted daughter, his poor child of the Marshalsea hushed to rest. If there were a last subject in his thoughts, and it lay towards Twickenham, its form was so indefinite that it was little more than the pervading atmosphere in which these other subjects floated before him.

He had crossed the heath and was leaving it behind, when he gained upon a figure which had been in advance of him for some time, and which, as he gained upon it, he thought he knew. He derived this impression from something in the turn of the head, and in the figure's action of consideration, as it went on at a sufficiently sturdy walk. But when the man—for it was a man's figure—pushed his hat up at the back of his head, and stopped to consider some object before him, he knew it to be Daniel Doyce.

"How do you do, Mr. Doyce?" said Clennam, overtaking him. "I am glad to see you again, and in a healthier place than the Circumlocution Office."

"Ha! Mr. Meagles's friend!" exclaimed that public criminal, coming out of some mental combinations he had been making, and offering his hand. "I am glad to see you, sir. Will you excuse me if I forget your name?"

"Readily. It's not a celebrated name. It's not Barnacle."

"No, no," said Daniel, laughing. "And now I know what it is. It's Clennam. How do you do, Mr. Clennam?"

"I have some hope," said Arthur, as they walked on together, that we may be going to the same place, Mr. Doyce."

"Meaning Twickenham?" returned Daniel. "I am glad to hear it."

They were soon quite intimate, and lightened the way with a variety of conversation. The ingenious culprit was a man of great modesty and good sense; and, though a plain man, had been too much accustomed to combine what was original and daring in conception with what was patient and minute in execution, to be by any means an ordinary man. It was at first difficult to lead him to speak about himself, and he put off Arthur's advances in that direction by admitting slightly, oh yes, he had done this, and he had done that, and such a thing was of his making, and such another thing was his discovery, but it was his trade, you see, his trade; until, as he gradually became assured that his companion had a real interest in his account of himself, he frankly yielded to it. Then it appeared that he was the son of a north-country blacksmith, and had originally been apprenticed by his widowed mother to a lock-maker; that he had "struck out a few little things" at the lock-maker's, which had led to his being released from his indentures with a present, which present had enabled him to gratify his ardent wish to bind himself to a working engineer, under whom he had labored hard, learned hard, and lived hard, seven years. His time being out, he had "worked in the shop" at weekly wages seven or eight years more; and had then betaken himself to the banks of the Clyde, where he had studied, and filed, and hammered, and improved his knowledge, theoretical and practical, for six or seven years more. There he had had an offer to go to Lyons, which he had accepted; and from Lyons had been engaged to go to Germany, and in Germany had had an offer to go to St. Petersburg, and there had done very well indeed—never better. However, he had naturally felt a preference for his own country, and a wish to gain distinction there, and to do whatever service he could do, there rather than elsewhere. And so he had come home. And so at home he had established himself in

"But, Lord bless me!" cried Mr. Meagles, rubbing his hands with a relish, "it was an uncommonly pleasant thing being in quarantine, wasn't it? Do you know, I have often wished myself back again? We were a capital party."

This was Mr. Meagles's invariable habit. Always to object to everything while he was travelling, and always to want to get back to it when he was not travelling.

"If it was summer-time," said Mr. Meagles, "which I wish it was on your account, and in order that you might see the place at its best, you would hardly be able to hear yourself speak for birds. Being practical people, we never allow anybody to scare the birds; and the birds, being practical people too, come about us in myriads. We are delighted to see you, Clennam (if you'll allow me, I shall drop the Mister); I heartily assure you, we are delighted."

"I have not had so pleasant a greeting," said Clennam—then he recalled what Little Dorrit had said to him in his own room, and faithfully added "except once—since we last walked to and fro, looking down at the Mediterranean."

"Ah!" returned Mr. Meagles. "Something like a look out, *that* was, wasn't it? I don't want a military government, but I shouldn't mind a little allonging and marshonging—just a dash of it—in this neighbourhood sometimes. It's Devilish still."

Bestowing this eulogium on the retired character of his retreat with a dubious shake of the head, Mr. Meagles led the way into the house. It was just large enough, and no more; was as pretty within as it was without, and was perfectly well-arranged and comfortable. Some traces of the migratory habits of the family were to be observed in the covered frames and furniture, and wrapped-up hangings; but it was easy to see that it was one of Mr. Meagles's whims to have the cottage always kept, in their absence, as if they were always coming back the day after to-morrow. Of articles collected on his various expeditions, there was such a vast miscellany that it was like the dwelling of an amiable Corsair. There were antiquities from Central Italy, made by the best modern houses in that department of industry; bits of mummy from Egypt (and perhaps Birmingham); model gondolas from Venice; model villages from Switzerland; morsels of tessellated pavement from Herculaneum and Pompeii, like petrified minced veal; ashes out of tombs, and lava out of Vesuvius; Spanish fans, Spezzian straw hats, Moorish slippers, Tuscan hair-pins, Carrara sculpture, Trastaverini scarves, Genoese velvets and filagree, Neapolitan coral, Roman cameos, Geneva jewellery, Arab lanterns, rosaries blest all round by the Pope himself, and an infinite variety of lumber. There were views, like and unlike, of a multitude of places; and there was one little picture-room devoted to a few of the regular sticky old Saints, with sinews like whipcord, hair like Neptune's, wrinkles like tattooing, and such coats of varnish that every holy personage served for a fly-trap, and became what is now called in the vulgar tongue a Catch-em-alive O. Of these pictorial acquisitions Mr. Meagles spoke in the usual manner. He was no judge, he said, except of what pleased himself; he had picked them up, dirt-cheap, and people *had* considered them rather fine. One man, who at any rate ought to know something

of the subject, had declared that "Sage, Reading" (a specially oily old gentleman in a blanket, with a swan's-down tippet for a beard, and a web of cracks all over him like rich pie-crust), to be a fine Guercino. As for Sebastian del Piombo there, you would judge for yourself; if it were not his later manner, the question was, Who was it? Titian, that might or might not be—perhaps he had only touched it. Daniel Doyce said perhaps he hadn't touched it, but Mr. Meagles rather declined to overhear the remark.

When he had shown all his spoils, Mr. Meagles took them into his own snug room overlooking the lawn, which was fitted up in part like a dressing-room and in part like an office, and in which, upon a kind of counter-desk, were a pair of brass scales for weighing gold, and a scoop for shovelling out money.

"Here they are, you see," said Mr. Meagles. "I stood behind these two articles five-and-thirty years running, when I no more thought of gadding about than I now think of—staying at home. When I left the Bank for good, I asked for them, and brought them away with me. I mention it at once, or you might suppose that I sit in my counting-house (as Pet says I do), like the king in the poem of the four-and-twenty blackbirds, counting out my money."

Clennam's eyes had strayed to a natural picture on the wall, of two pretty little girls with their arms entwined. "Yes, Clennam," said Mr. Meagles in a lower voice. "There they both are. It was taken some seventeen years ago. As I often say to Mother, they were babies then."

"Their names?" said Arthur.

"Ah, to be sure! You have never heard any name but Pet. Pet's name is Minnie; her sister's, Lillie."

"Should you have known, Mr. Clennam, that one of them was meant for me?" asked Pet herself, now standing in the doorway.

"I might have thought that both of them were meant for you, both are still so like you. Indeed," said Clennam, glancing from the fair original to the picture and back, "I cannot even now say which is not your portrait."

"D'ye hear that, Mother?" cried Mr. Meagles to his wife, who had followed her daughter. "It's always the same, Clennam; nobody can decide. The child to your left is Pet."

The picture happened to be near a looking-glass. As Arthur looked at it again, he saw, by the reflection of the mirror, Tattycoram stop in passing outside the door, listen to what was going on, and pass away with an angry and contemptuous frown upon her face that changed its beauty into ugliness.

"But come!" said Mr. Meagles. "You have had a long walk, and will be glad to get your boots off. As to Daniel here, I suppose he'd never think of taking *his* boots off, unless we showed him a boot-jack."

"Why not?" asked Daniel, with a significant smile at Clennam.

"Oh! You have so many things to think about," returned Mr. Meagles, clapping him on the shoulder, as if his weakness must not be left to itself on any account. "Figures, and wheels, and cogs, and levers, and screws, and cylinders, and a thousand things."

"In my calling," said Daniel, amused, "the greater usually includes the less. But never mind, never mind! Whatever pleases you, pleases me."

Clennam could not help speculating, as he seated himself in his room by the fire, whether there might be in the breast of this honest, affectionate, and cordial Mr. Meagles, any microscopic portion of the mustard-seed that had sprung up into the great tree of the Circumlocution Office. His curious sense of a general superiority to Daniel Doyce, which seemed to be founded, not so much on anything in Doyce's personal character, as on the mere fact of his being an originator and a man out of the beaten track of other men, suggested the idea. It might have occupied him until he went down to dinner an hour afterwards, if he had not had another question to consider, which had been in his mind so long ago as before he was in quarantine at Marseilles, and which had now returned to it, and was very urgent with it. No less a question than this: Whether he should allow himself to fall in love with Pet?

He was twice her age. (He changed the leg he had crossed over the other, and tried the calculation again, but could not bring out the total at less.) He was twice her age. Well! He was young in appearance, young in health and strength, young in heart. A man was certainly not old at forty; and many men were not in circumstances to marry, or did not marry, until they attained that time of life. On the other hand, the question was, not what he thought of the point, but what she thought of it.

He believed that Mr. Meagles was disposed to entertain a ripe regard for him, and he knew that he had a sincere regard for Mr. Meagles and his good wife. He could foresee that to relinquish this beautiful only child, of whom they were so fond, to any husband, would be a trial of their love which perhaps they never yet had had the fortitude to contemplate. But the more beautiful and winning and charming she, the nearer they must always be to the necessity of approaching it. And why not in his favor, as well as in another's?

When he had got so far, it came again into his head, that the question was, not what they thought of it but what she thought of it.

Arthur Clennam was a retiring man, with a sense of many deficiencies; and he so exalted the merits of the beautiful Minnie in his mind, and depressed his own, that when he pinned himself to this point, his hopes began to fail him. He came to the final resolution, as he made himself ready for dinner, that he would *not* allow himself to fall in love with Pet.

They were only five, at a round table, and it was very pleasant indeed. They had so many places and people to recal, and they were all so easy and cheerful together (Daniel Doyce either sitting out like an amused spectator at cards, or coming in with some shrewd little experiences of his own, when it happened to be to the purpose), that they might have been together twenty times, and not have known so much of one another.

"And Miss Wade," said Mr. Meagles, after they had recalled a number of fellow-travellers. "Has anybody seen Miss Wade?"

"I have," said Tattycoram.

She had brought a little mantle which her young mistress had sent

for, and was bending over her, putting it on, when she lifted up her dark eyes, and made this unexpected answer.

"Tatty!" her young mistress exclaimed. "You seen Miss Wade?—where?"

"Here, Miss," said Tattycoram.

"How?"

An impatient glance from Tattycoram seemed, as Clennam saw it, to answer "With my eyes!" But her only answer in words was: "I met her near the church."

"What was she doing there I wonder!" said Mr. Meagles. "Not going to it, I should think."

"She had written to me first," said Tattycoram.

"Oh, Tatty!" murmured her mistress, "take your hands away. I feel as if some one else was touching me!"

She said it in a quick involuntary way, but half playfully, and not more [petulantly or disagreeably than a favourite child might have done, who laughed next moment. Tattycoram set her full red lips together, and crossed her arms upon her bosom.

"Did you wish to know, sir," she said, looking at Mr. Meagles, "what Miss Wade wrote to me about?"

"Well, Tattycoram," returned Mr. Meagles, "since you ask the question, and we are all friends here, perhaps you may as well mention it, if you are so inclined."

"She knew, when we were travelling, where you lived," said Tattycoram, "and she had seen me not quite—not quite——"

"Not quite in a good temper, Tattycoram?" suggested Mr. Meagles, shaking his head at the dark eyes with a quiet caution. "Take a little time—count five-and-twenty, Tattycoram."

She pressed her lips together again, and took a long deep breath.

"So she wrote to me to say that if I ever felt myself hurt," she looked down at her young mistress, "or found myself worried," she looked down at her again, "I might go to her, and be considerably treated. I was to think of it, and could speak to her by the church. So I went there to thank her."

"Tatty," said her young mistress, putting her hand up over her shoulder that the other might take it, "Miss Wade almost frightened me when we parted, and I scarcely liked to think of her just now as having been so near me without my knowing it. Tatty, dear!"

Tatty stood for a moment, immovable.

"Hey?" cried Mr. Meagles. "Count another five-and-twenty, Tattycoram."

She might have counted a dozen, when she bent and put her lips to the caressing hand. It patted her cheek, as it touched the owner's beautiful curls, and Tattycoram went away.

"Now, there," said Mr. Meagles, softly, as he gave a turn to the dumb-waiter on his right hand, to twirl the sugar towards himself. "There's a girl who might be lost and ruined, if she wasn't among practical people. Mother and I know, solely from being practical, that there are times when that girl's whole nature seems to roughen itself against seeing us so bound up in Pet. No father and mother were bound up in her, poor soul. I don't like to think of the way in which that unfor-

tunate child, with all that passion and protest in her, feels when she hears the Fifth Commandment on a Sunday. I am always inclined to call out, Church, Count five-and-twenty, Tattycoram."

Besides his dumb-waiter, Mr. Meagles had two other not dumb waiters, in the persons of two parlor-maids, with rosy faces and bright eyes, who were a highly ornamental part of the table decoration. "And why not, you see?" said Mr. Meagles, on this head. "As I always say to Mother, why not have something pretty to look at, if you have anything at all?"

A certain Mrs. Tickit, who was Cook and Housekeeper when the family were at home, and Housekeeper only when the family were away, completed the establishment. Mr. Meagles regretted that the nature of the duties in which she was engaged, rendered Mrs. Tickit unrepresentable at present, but hoped to introduce her to the new visitor to-morrow. She was an important part of the cottage, he said, and all his friends knew her. That was her picture up in the corner. When they went away, she always put on the silk gown and the jet-black row of curls represented in that portrait (her hair was reddish-grey in the kitchen), established herself in the breakfast-room, put her spectacles between two particular leaves of Doctor Buchan's Domestic Medicine, and sat looking over the blind all day until they came back again. It was supposed that no persuasion could be invented which would induce Mrs. Tickit to abandon her post at the blind, however long their absence, or to dispense with the attendance of Doctor Buchan: the lucubrations of which learned practitioner, Mr. Meagles implicitly believed she had never yet consulted to the extent of one word in her life.

In the evening, they played an old-fashioned rubber; and Pet sat looking over her father's hand, or singing to herself by fits and starts at the piano. She was a spoilt child; but how could she be otherwise? Who could be much with so pliable and beautiful a creature, and not yield to her endearing influence? Who could pass an evening in the house, and not love her for the grace and charm of her very presence in the room? This was Clennam's reflection, notwithstanding the final conclusion at which he had arrived up-stairs.

In making it, he revoked. "Why, what are you thinking of, my good sir?" asked the astonished Mr. Meagles, who was his partner. "I beg your pardon. Nothing," returned Clennam. "Think of something, next time; that's a dear fellow," said Mr. Meagles. Pet laughingly believed he had been thinking of Miss Wade. "Why of Miss Wade, Pet?" asked her father. "Why, indeed!" said Arthur Clennam. Pet colored a little, and went to the piano again.

As they broke up for the night, Arthur overheard Doyce ask his host if he could give him half-an-hour's conversation before breakfast in the morning? The host replying willingly, Arthur lingered behind a moment, having his own word to add on that topic.

"Mr. Meagles," he said, on their being left alone, "do you remember when you advised me to go straight to London?"

"Perfectly well."

"And when you gave me some other good advice, which I needed at that time?"

"I won't say what it was worth," answered Mr. Meagles; "but of course I remember our being very pleasant and confidential together."

"I have acted on your advice; and having disembarrassed myself of an occupation that was painful to me for many reasons, wish to devote myself and what means I have, to another pursuit."

"Right! You can't do it too soon," said Mr. Meagles.

"Now, as I came down to-day, I found that your friend, Mr. Doyce, is looking for a partner in his business—not a partner in his mechanical knowledge, but in the ways and means of turning the business arising from it to the best account."

"Just so," said Mr. Meagles, with his hands in his pockets, and with the old business expression of face that had belonged to the scales and scoop.

"Mr. Doyce mentioned incidentally, in the course of our conversation, that he was going to take your valuable advice on the subject of finding such a partner. If you should think our views and opportunities at all likely to coincide, perhaps you will let him know my available position. I speak, of course, in ignorance of the details, and they may be unsuitable on both sides."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Mr. Meagles, with the caution belonging to the scales and scoop.

"But they will be a question of figures and accounts——"

"Just so, just so," said Mr. Meagles, with the arithmetical solidity belonging to the scales and scoop.

"—And I shall be glad to enter into the subject, provided Mr. Doyce responds, and you think well of it. If you will at present, therefore, allow me to place it in your hands, you will much oblige me."

"Clennam, I accept the trust with readiness," said Mr. Meagles.

"And, without anticipating any of the points which you, as a man of business, have of course reserved, I am free to say to you that I think something may come of this. Of one thing you may be perfectly certain. Daniel is an honest man."

"I am so sure of it, that I have promptly made up my mind to speak to you."

"You must guide him, you know; you must steer him; you must direct him; he is one of a crotchety sort," said Mr. Meagles, evidently meaning nothing more than that he did new things and went new ways; "but he is as honest as the sun, and so good night!"

Clennam went back to his room, sat down again before his fire, and made up his mind that he was glad he had resolved not to fall in love with Pet. She was so beautiful, so amiable, so apt to receive any true impression given to her gentle nature and her innocent heart, and make the man who should be so happy as to communicate it, the most fortunate and enviable of all men, that he was very glad indeed he had come to that conclusion.

But, as this might have been a reason for coming to the opposite conclusion, he followed out the theme again a little way in his mind. To justify himself, perhaps.

"Suppose that a man," so his thoughts ran, "who had been of age some twenty years or so; who was a diffident man, from the circumstances of his youth; who was rather a grave man, from the tenor of

his life; who knew himself to be deficient in many little engaging qualities which he admired in others, from having been long in a distant region, with nothing softening near him; who had no kind sisters to present to her; who had no congenial home to make her known in; who was a stranger in the land; who had not a fortune to compensate, in any measure, for these defects; who had nothing in his favor but his honest love and his general wish to do right—suppose such a man were to come to this house, and were to yield to the captivation of this charming girl, and were to persuade himself that he could hope to win her; what a weakness it would be!”

He softly opened his window, and looked out upon the serene river. Year after year so much allowance for the drifting of the ferry-boat, so many miles an hour the flowing of the stream, here the rushes, there the lilies, nothing uncertain or unquiet.

Why should he be vexed or sore at heart? It was not his weakness that he had imagined. It was nobody's, nobody's within his knowledge, why should it trouble him? And yet it did trouble him. And he thought—who has not thought for a moment, sometimes—that it might be better to flow away monotonously, like the river, and to compound for its insensibility to happiness with its insensibility to pain.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOBODY'S RIVAL.

BEFORE breakfast in the morning, Arthur walked out to look about him. As the morning was fine, and he had an hour on his hands, he crossed the river by the ferry, and strolled along a footpath through some meadows. When he came back to the towing-path, he found the ferry-boat on the opposite side, and a gentleman hailing it and waiting to be taken over.

This gentleman looked barely thirty. He was well dressed, of a sprightly and gay appearance, a well-knit figure, and a rich dark complexion. As Arthur came over the stile and down to the water's edge, the loungee glanced at him for a moment, and then resumed his occupation of idly tossing stones into the water with his foot. There was something in his way of spurning them out of their places with his heel, and getting them into the required position, that Clennam thought had an air of cruelty in it. Most of us have more or less frequently derived a similar impression, from a man's manner of doing some very little thing: plucking a flower, clearing away an obstacle, or even destroying an insentient object.

The gentleman's thoughts were preoccupied, as his face showed, and he took no notice of a fine Newfoundland dog, who watched him attentively, and watched every stone too, in its turn, eager to spring into the river on receiving his master's sign. The ferry-boat came

over, however, without his receiving any sign, and when it grounded his master took him by the collar and walked him into it.

"Not this morning," he said to the dog. "You won't do for ladies' company, dripping wet. Lie down."

Clennam followed the man and the dog into the boat, and took his seat. The dog did as he was ordered. The man remained standing, with his hands in his pockets, and towered between Clennam and the prospect. Man and dog both jumped lightly out as soon as they touched the other side, and went away. Clennam was glad to be rid of them.

The church clock struck the breakfast hour, as he walked up the little lane by which the garden-gate was approached. The moment he pulled the bell, a deep loud barking assailed him from within the wall.

"I heard no dog last night," thought Clennam. The gate was opened by one of the rosy maids, and on the lawn were the Newfoundland dog and the man.

"Miss Minnie is not down yet, gentlemen," said the blushing portress, as they all came together in the garden. Then she said to the master of the dog, "Mr. Clennam, sir," and tripped away.

"Odd enough, Mr. Clennam, that we should have met just now," said the man. Upon which the dog became mute. "Allow me to introduce myself—Henry Gowan. A pretty place this, and looks wonderfully well this morning!"

The manner was easy, and the voice agreeable; but still Clennam thought, that if he had not made that decided resolution to avoid falling in love with Pet, he would have taken a dislike to this Henry Gowan.

"It's new to you, I believe?" said this Gowan, when Arthur had extolled the place.

"Quite new. I made acquaintance with it only yesterday afternoon."

"Ah! Of course this is not its best aspect. It used to look charming in the spring, before they went away last time. I should like you to have seen it then."

But for that resolution so often recalled, Clennam might have wished him in the crater of Mount Etna, in return for this civility.

"I have had the pleasure of seeing it under many circumstances during the last three years, and it's—a Paradise."

It was (at least it might have been, always excepting for that wise resolution) like his dexterous impudence to call it a Paradise. He only called it a Paradise because he first saw her coming, and so made her out within her hearing to be an angel, Confusion to him!

And ah, how beaming she looked, and how glad! How she caressed the dog, and how the dog knew her! How expressive that heightened color in her face, that fluttered manner, her downcast eyes, her irresolute happiness! When had Clennam seen her look like this? Not that there was any reason why he might, could, would, or should have ever seen her look like this, or that he had ever hoped for himself to see her look like this; but still—when had he ever known her do it!

He stood at a little distance from them. This Gowan, when he had talked about a Paradise, had gone up to her and taken her hand. The dog had put his great paws on her arm and laid his head against her dear bosom. She had laughed and welcomed them, and made far too much of the dog, far, far, too much—that is to say, supposing there had been any third person looking on who loved her.

She disengaged herself now, and came to Clennam, and put her hand in his and wished him good morning, and gracefully made as if she would take his arm and be escorted into the house. This Gowan had no objection. No, he knew he was too safe.

There was a passing cloud on Mr. Meagles's good-humoured face, when they all three (four, counting the dog, and he was the most objectionable but one of the party) came in to breakfast. Neither it, nor the touch of uneasiness on Mrs. Meagles as she directed her eyes towards it, was unobserved by Clennam.

"Well, Gowan," said Mr. Meagles, even suppressing a sigh; "how goes the world with you this morning?"

"Much as usual, sir. Lion and I being determined not to waste anything of our weekly visit, turned out early, and came over from Kingston, my present head-quarters, where I am making a sketch or two." Then he told how he had met Mr. Clennam at the ferry, and they had come over together.

"Mrs. Gowan is well, Henry?" said Mrs. Meagles. (Clennam became attentive.)

"My mother is quite well, thank you." (Clennam became inattentive.) "I have taken the liberty of making an addition to your family dinner-party to-day, which I hope will not be inconvenient to you or to Mr. Meagles. I couldn't very well get out of it," he explained, turning to the latter. "The young fellow wrote to propose himself to me; and as he is well connected, I thought you would not object to my transferring him here."

"Who *is* the young fellow?" asked Mr. Meagles, with peculiar complacency.

"He is one of the Barnacles. Tite Barnacle's son, Clarence Barnacle, who is in his father's Department. I can at least guarantee that the river shall not suffer from his visit. He won't set it on fire."

"Aye, aye?" said Meagles. "A Barnacle is he? *We* know something of that family, eh Dan? By George, they are at the top of the tree, though! Let me see. What relation will this young fellow be to Lord Decimus now? His Lordship married, in seventeen ninety-seven, Lady Jemima Bilberry, who was the second daughter by the third marriage—no! There I am wrong! That was Lady Seraphina—Lady Jemima was the first daughter by the second marriage of the fifteenth Earl of Stiltstalking with The Honourable Clementina Toozellem. Very well. Now this young fellow's father married a Stiltstalking and *his* father married his cousin who was a Barnacle. The father of that father who married a Barnacle, married a Joddleby.—I am getting a little too far back, Gowan; I want to make out what relation this young fellow is to Lord Decimus."

"That's easily stated. His father is nephew to Lord Decimus."

"Nephew—to—Lord—Decimus," Mr. Meagles luxuriously repeated with his eyes shut, that he might have nothing to distract him from the full flavor of the genealogical tree. "By George, you are right, Gowan. So he is."

"Consequently, Lord Decimus is his great uncle."

"But stop a bit!" said Mr. Meagles, opening his eyes with a fresh discovery. "Then, on the mother's side, Lady Stiltstalking is his great aunt."

"Of course she is."

"Aye, aye, aye?" said Mr. Meagles, with much interest. "Indeed, indeed? We shall be glad to see him. We'll entertain him as well as we can, in our humble way; and we shall not starve him, I hope, at all events."

In the beginning of this dialogue, Clennam had expected some great harmless outburst from Mr. Meagles, like that which had made him burst out of the Circumlocution Office, holding Doyce by the collar. But his good friend had a weakness which none of us need go into the next street to find, and which no amount of Circumlocution experience could long subdue in him. Clennam looked at Doyce; but Doyce knew all about it beforehand, and looked at his plate, and made no sign, and said no word.

"I am much obliged to you," said Gowan, to conclude the subject. "Clarence is a great ass, but he is one of the dearest and best fellows that ever lived!"

It appeared, before the breakfast was over, that everybody whom this Gowan knew was either more or less of an ass, or more or less of a knave; but was, notwithstanding, the most loveable, the most engaging, the simplest, truest, kindest, dearest, best fellow that ever lived. The process by which this unvarying result was attained, whatever the premises, might have been stated by Mr. Henry Gowan thus: "I claim to be always book-keeping, with a peculiar nicety, in every man's case, and posting up a careful little account of Good and Evil with him. I do this so conscientiously, that I am happy to tell you I find the most worthless of men to be the dearest old fellow too; and am in a condition to make the gratifying report, that there is much less difference than you are inclined to suppose between an honest man and a scoundrel." The effect of this cheering discovery happened to be, that while he seemed to be scrupulously finding good in most men, he did in reality lower it where it was, and set it up where it was not; but that was its only disagreeable or dangerous feature.

It scarcely seemed, however, to afford Mr. Meagles as much satisfaction as the Barnacle genealogy had done. The cloud that Clennam had never seen upon his face before that morning, frequently overcast it again; and there was the same shadow of uneasy observation of him on the comely face of his wife. More than once or twice when Pet caressed the dog, it appeared to Clennam that her father was unhappy in seeing her do it; and, in one particular instance when Gowan stood on the other side of the dog, and bent his head at the same time, Arthur fancied that he saw tears rise to Mr. Meagles's

eyes as he hurried out of the room. It was either the fact too, or he fancied further, that Pet herself was not insensible to these little incidents; that she tried, with a more delicate affection than usual, to express to her good father how much she loved him; that it was on this account that she fell behind the rest, both as they went to church and as they returned from it, and took his arm. He could not have sworn but that as he walked alone in the garden afterwards, he had an instantaneous glimpse of her in her father's room, clinging to both her parents with the greatest tenderness, and weeping on her father's shoulder.

The latter part of the day turning out wet, they were fain to keep the house, look over Mr. Meagles's collection, and beguile the time with conversation. This Gowan had plenty to say for himself, and said it in an off-hand and amusing manner. He appeared to be an artist by profession, and to have been at Rome some time; yet he had a slight, careless, amateur way with him—a perceptible limp, both in his devotion to art and his attainments—which Clennam could scarcely understand.

He applied to Daniel Doyce for help, as they stood together, looking out of window.

"You know Mr. Gowan?" he said in a low voice.

"I have seen him here. Comes here every Sunday, when they are at home."

"An artist, I infer from what he says?"

"A sort of a one," said Daniel Doyce, in a surly tone.

"What sort of a one?" asked Clennam, with a smile.

"Why, he has sauntered into the Arts at a leisurely Pall-Mall pace," said Doyce, "and I doubt if they care to be taken quite so coolly."

Pursuing his inquiries, Clennam found that the Gowan family were a very distant ramification of the Barnacles; and that the paternal Gowan, originally attached to a legation abroad, had been pensioned off as a Commissioner of nothing particular somewhere or other, and had died at his post with his drawn salary in his hand, nobly defending it to the last extremity. In consideration of this eminent public service, the Barnacle then in power, had recommended the Crown to bestow a pension of two or three hundred a-year on his widow; to which the next Barnacle in power had added certain shady and sedate apartments in the Palace at Hampton Court, where the old lady still lived, deploring the degeneracy of the times, in company with several other old ladies of both sexes. Her son, Mr. Henry Gowan, inheriting from his father, the Commissioner, that very questionable help in life, a very small independence, had been difficult to settle; the rather as public appointments chanced to be scarce, and his genius, during his earlier manhood, was of that exclusively agricultural character which applies itself to the cultivation of wild oats. At last he had declared that he would become a Painter; partly because he had always had an idle knack that way, and partly to grieve the souls of the Barnacles-in-chief who had not provided for him. So it had come to pass successively, first, that several distinguished ladies had been frightfully shocked; then, that portfolios of his performances had been handed about o' nights, and declared with ecstacy to be perfect Claudes, perfect Cuyps, perfect phænomena; then, that Lord Decimus had bought his picture, and had

asked the President and Council to dinner at a blow, and had said, with his own magnificent gravity, "Do you know, there appears to me to be really immense merit in that work?" and, in short, that people of condition had absolutely taken pains to bring him into fashion. But, somehow it had all failed. The prejudiced public had stood out against it obstinately. They had determined not to admire Lord Decimus's picture. They had determined to believe that in every service, except their own, a man must qualify himself, by striving early and late, and by working heart and soul, might and main. So now Mr. Gowan, like that worn-out old coffin which never was Mahomet's nor anybody else's, hung midway between two points: jaundiced and jealous as to the one he had left: jaundiced and jealous as to the other he couldn't reach.

Such was the substance of Clennam's discoveries concerning him, made that rainy Sunday afternoon and afterwards.

About an hour or so after dinner time, Young Barnacle appeared, attended by his eye-glass; in honor of whose family connexions, Mr. Meagles had cashiered the pretty parlor-maids for the day, and placed on duty in their stead two dingy men. Young Barnacle was in the last degree amazed and disconcerted at sight of Arthur, and had murmured involuntarily, "Look here!—Upon my soul, you know!" before his presence of mind returned.

Even then, he was obliged to embrace the earliest opportunity of taking his friend into a window, and saying, in a nasal way that was a part of his general debility:

"I want to speak to you, Gowan. I say. Look here. Who is that fellow?"

"A friend of our host's. None of mine."

"He's a most ferocious Radical, you know," said Young Barnacle.

"Is he? How do you know?"

"Egod, sir, he was Pitching into our people the other day, in the most tremendous manner. Went up to our place and Pitched into my father to that extent that it was necessary to order him out. Came back to our department and Pitched into me. Look here. You never saw such a fellow."

"What did he want?"

"Egod, sir," returned Young Barnacle, "He said he wanted to know, you know! Pervaded our department—without an appointment—and said he wanted to know!"

The stare of indignant wonder with which Young Barnacle accompanied this disclosure, would have strained his eyes injuriously but for the opportune relief of dinner. Mr. Meagles (who had been extremely solicitous to know how his uncle and aunt were) begged him to conduct Mrs. Meagles to the dining-room. And when he sat on Mrs. Meagles's right hand, Mr. Meagles looked as gratified as if his whole family were there.

All the natural charm of the previous day was gone. The eaters of the dinner, like the dinner itself, were lukewarm, insipid, over-done—and all owing to this poor little dull Young Barnacle. Conversationless at any time, he was now the victim of a weakness special to the occasion, and solely referable to Clennam. He was under a

pressing and continual necessity of looking at that gentleman, which occasioned his eye-glass to get into his soup, into his wine-glass, into Mrs. Meagles's plate, to hang down his back like a bell-rope, and be several times disgracefully restored to his bosom by one of the dingy men. Weakened in mind by his frequent losses of this instrument, and its determination not to stick in his eye, and more and more enfeebled in intellect every time he looked at the mysterious Clennam, he applied spoons to his eye, forks, and other foreign matters connected with the furniture of the dinner-table. His discovery of these mistakes greatly increased his difficulties, but never released him from the necessity of looking at Clennam. And whenever Clennam spoke, this ill-starred young man was clearly seized with a dread that he was coming, by some artful device, round to that point of wanting to know, you know.

It may be questioned, therefore, whether anyone but Mr. Meagles had much enjoyment of the time. Mr. Meagles, however, thoroughly enjoyed Young Barnacle. As a mere flask of the golden water in the tale became a full fountain when it was poured out, so Mr. Meagles seemed to feel that this small spice of Barnacle imparted to his table the flavor of the whole family tree. In its presence, his frank, fine, genuine qualities paled; he was not so easy, he was not so natural, he was striving after something that did not belong to him, he was not himself. What a strange peculiarity on the part of Mr. Meagles, and where should we find such another case!

At last the wet Sunday wore itself out in a wet night; and Young Barnacle went home in a cab, feebly smoking; and the objectionable Gowan went away on foot, accompanied by the objectionable dog. Pet had taken the most amiable pains all day to be friendly with Clennam, but Clennam had been a little reserved since breakfast—that is to say, would have been, if he had loved her.

When he had gone to his own room, and had again thrown himself into the chair by the fire, Mr. Doyce knocked at the door, candle in hand, to ask him how and at what hour he purposed returning on the morrow? After settling this question, he said a word to Mr. Doyce about this Gowan—who would have run in his head a good deal, if he had been his rival.

"Those are not good prospects for a painter," said Clennam.

"No," returned Doyce.

Mr. Doyce stood, chamber-candlestick in hand, the other hand in his pocket, looking hard at the flame of his candle, with a certain quiet perception in his face that they were going to say something more.

"I thought our good friend a little changed, and out of spirits, after he came this morning?" said Clennam.

"Yes," returned Doyce.

"But not his daughter?" said Clennam.

"No," said Doyce.

There was a pause on both sides. Mr. Doyce, still looking at the flame of his candle, slowly resumed:

"The truth is, he has twice taken his daughter abroad, in the hope of separating her from Mr. Gowan. He rather thinks she is disposed

to like him, and he has painful doubts (I quite agree with him, as I dare say you do), of the hopefulness of such a marriage."

"There——" Clennam choked, and coughed, and stopped.

"Yes, you have taken cold," said Daniel Doyce. But without looking at him.

—"There is an engagement between them, of course?" said Clennam airily.

"No. As I am told, certainly not. It has been solicited on the gentleman's part, but none has been made. Since their recent return, our friend has yielded to a weekly visit, but that is the utmost. Minnie would not deceive her father and mother. You have travelled with them, and I believe you know what a bond there is among them, extending even beyond this present life. All that there is between Miss Minnie and Mr. Gowan, I have no doubt we see."

"Ah! We see enough!" cried Arthur.

Mr. Doyce wished him Good Night, in the tone of a man who had heard a mournful, not to say despairing, exclamation, and who sought to infuse some encouragement and hope into the mind of the person by whom it had been uttered. Such tone was probably a part of his oddity, as one of a crotchety band; for how could he have heard anything of that kind, without Clennam's hearing it, too?

The rain fell heavily on the roof, and pattered on the ground, and dripped among the evergreens, and the leafless branches of the trees. The rain fell heavily, drearily. It was a night of tears.

If Clennam had not decided against falling in love with Pet; if he had had the weakness to do it; if he had, little by little, persuaded himself to set all the earnestness of his nature, all the might of his hope, and all the wealth of his matured character, on that cast; if he had done this, and found that all was lost; he would have been, that night, unutterably miserable. As it was——

As it was, the rain fell heavily, drearily.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LITTLE DORRIT'S LOVER.

LITTLE DORRIT had not attained her twenty-second birthday without finding a lover. Even in the sallow Marshalsea, the ever young Archer shot off a few featherless arrows now and then from a mouldy bow, and winged a Collegian or two.

Little Dorrit's lover, however, was not a Collegian. He was the sentimental son of a turnkey. His father hoped, in the fulness of time, to leave him the inheritance of an unstained key; and had from his early youth familiarised him with the duties of his office, and with an ambition to retain the prison-lock in the family. While the succession was yet in abeyance, he assisted his mother in the conduct of a snug tobacco business round the corner of Horsemonger Lane (his

father being a non-resident turnkey), which could usually command a neat connexion within the College walls.

Years ago, when the object of his affections was wont to sit in her little arm-chair by the high Lodge-fender, Young John (family name, Chivery), a year older than herself, had eyed her with admiring wonder. When he had played with her in the yard, his favorite game had been to counterfeit locking her up in corners, and to counterfeit letting her out for real kisses. When he grew tall enough to peep through the keyhole of the great lock of the main door, he had divers times set down his father's dinner, or supper, to get on as it might on the outer side thereof, while he stood taking cold in one eye by dint of peeping at her through that airy perspective.

If Young John had ever slackened in his truth in the less penetrable days of his boyhood, when youth is prone to wear its boots unlaced and is happily unconscious of digestive organs, he had soon strung it up again and screwed it tight. At nineteen, his hand had inscribed in chalk on that part of the wall which fronted her lodging, on the occasion of her birthday, "Welcome sweet nursling of the Fairies!" At twenty-three, the same hand falteringly presented cigars on Sundays to the Father of the Marshalsea, and Father of the queen of his soul.

Young John was small of stature, with rather weak legs and very weak light hair. One of his eyes (perhaps the eye that used to peep through the keyhole) was also weak, and looked larger than the other, as if it couldn't collect itself. Young John was gentle likewise. But he was great of soul. Poetical, expansive, faithful.

Though too humble before the ruler of his heart to be sanguine, Young John had considered the subject of his attachment in all its lights and shades. Following it out to blissful results, he had descried, without self-commendation, a fitness in it. Say things prospered, and they were united. She, the child of the Marshalsea; he, the lock-keeper. There was a fitness in that. Say he became a resident turnkey. She would officially succeed to the chamber she had rented so long. There was a beautiful propriety in that. It looked over the wall, if you stood on tiptoe; and, with a trellis-work of scarlet beans and a canary or so, would become a very Arbour. There was a charming idea in that. Then, being all in all to one another, there was even an appropriate grace in the lock. With the world shut out (except that part of it which would be shut in); with its troubles and disturbances only known to them by hearsay, as they would be described by the pilgrims tarrying with them on their way to the Insolvent Shrine; with the Arbour above, and the Lodge below; they would glide down the stream of time, in pastoral domestic happiness. Young John drew tears from his eyes by finishing the picture with a tombstone in the adjoining churchyard, close against the prison wall, bearing the following touching inscription: "Sacred to the Memory of JOHN CHIVERY, Sixty years Turnkey, and fifty years Head Turnkey, Of the neighbouring Marshalsea, Who departed this life, universally respected, on the thirty-first of December, One thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, Aged eighty-three years. Also of his truly beloved and truly loving wife, AMY, Whose maiden name was

DORRIT, Who survived his loss not quite forty-eight hours, And who breathed her last in the Marshalsea aforesaid. There she was born, There she lived, There she died."

The Chivery parents were not ignorant of their son's attachment—indeed it had, on some exceptional occasions, thrown him into a state of mind that had impelled him to conduct himself with irascibility towards the customers, and damage the business—but they, in their turns, had worked it out to desirable conclusions. Mrs. Chivery, a prudent woman, had desired her husband to take notice that their John's prospects of the Lock would certainly be strengthened by an alliance with Miss Dorrit, who had herself a kind of claim upon the College, and was much respected there. Mrs. Chivery had desired her husband to take notice that if, on the one hand, their John had means and a post of trust, on the other hand, Miss Dorrit had Family; and that her (Mrs. Chivery's) sentiment was, that two halves made a whole. Mrs. Chivery, speaking as a mother and not as a diplomatist, had then, from a different point of view, desired her husband to recollect that their John had never been strong, and that his love had fretted and worried him enough as it was, without his being driven to do himself a mischief, as nobody couldn't say he wouldn't be if he was crossed. These arguments had so powerfully influenced the mind of Mr. Chivery, who was a man of few words, that he had, on sundry Sunday mornings, given his boy what he termed "a lucky touch," signifying that he considered such commendation of him to Good Fortune, preparatory to his that day declaring his passion and becoming triumphant. But Young John had never taken courage to make the declaration; and it was principally on these occasions that he had returned excited to the tobacco shop, and flown at the customers.

In this affair, as in every other, Little Dorrit herself was the last person considered. Her brother and sister were aware of it, and attained a sort of station by making a peg of it on which to air the miserably ragged old fiction of the family gentility. Her sister asserted the family gentility, by flouting the poor swain as he loitered about the prison for glimpses of his dear. Tip asserted the family gentility, and his own, by coming out in the character of the aristocratic brother, and loftily swaggering in the little skittle ground respecting seizures by the scruff of the neck, which there were looming probabilities of some gentleman unknown executing on some little puppy not mentioned. These were not the only members of the Dorrit family who turned it to account. No, no. The Father of the Marshalsea was supposed to know nothing about the matter, of course; his poor dignity could not see so low. But he took the cigars on Sundays, and was glad to get them; and sometimes even condescended to walk up and down the yard with the donor (who was proud and hopeful then), and benignantly to smoke one in his society. With no less readiness and condescension did he receive attentions from Chivery Senior, who always relinquished his arm-chair and newspaper to him, when he came into the Lodge during one of his spells of duty; and who had even mentioned to him, that if he would like at any time after dusk, quietly to step out into the fore-court and take a look at the street, there was not much to prevent him. If he did not avail himself of this latter civility, it was only because he had lost the relish for

it; inasmuch as he took everything else he could get, and would say at times, "Extremely civil person, Chivery; very attentive man and very respectful. Young Chivery, too; really, almost with a delicate perception of one's position here. A very well conducted family indeed, the Chiveries. Their behaviour gratifies me."

The devoted Young John all this time regarded the family with reverence. He never dreamed of disputing their pretensions, but did homage to the miserable Mumbo Jumbo they paraded. As to resenting any affront from *her* brother, he would have felt, even if he had not naturally been of a most pacific disposition, that to wag his tongue or lift his hand against that sacred gentleman would be an unhallowed act. He was sorry that his noble mind should take offence; still, he felt the fact to be not incompatible with its nobility, and sought to propitiate and conciliate that gallant soul. Her father, a gentleman in misfortune—a gentleman of a fine spirit and courtly manners, who always bore with him—he deeply honored. Her sister, he considered somewhat vain and proud, but a young lady of infinite accomplishments, who could not forget the past. It was an instinctive testimony to Little Dorrit's worth, and difference from all the rest, that the poor young fellow honored and loved her for being simply what she was.

The tobacco business round the corner of Horsemonger Lane was carried on in a rural establishment one story high, which had the benefit of the air from the yards of Horsemonger Lane Jail, and the advantage of a retired walk under the wall of that pleasant establishment. The business was of too modest a character to support a life-size Highlander, but it maintained a little one on a bracket on the doorpost, who looked like a fallen Cherub that had found it necessary to take to a kilt.

From the portal thus decorated, one Sunday after an early dinner of baked viands, Young John issued forth on his usual Sunday errand; not empty-handed, but with his offering of cigars. He was neatly attired in a plum-colored coat, with as large a collar of black velvet as his figure could carry; a silken waistcoat, bedecked with golden sprigs; a chaste neck-kerchief much in vogue at that day, representing a preserve of lilac pheasants on a buff ground; pantaloons so highly decorated with side-stripes, that each leg was a three-stringed lute; and a hat of state, very high and hard. When the prudent Mrs. Chivery perceived that in addition to these adornments her John carried a pair of white kid gloves, and a cane like a little finger-post, surmounted by an ivory hand marshalling him the way that he should go; and when she saw him, in this heavy marching order, turn the corner to the right; she remarked to Mr. Chivery who was at home at the time, that she thought she knew which way the wind blew.

The Collegians were entertaining a considerable number of visitors that Sunday afternoon, and their Father kept his room for the purpose of receiving presentations. After making the tour of the yard, Little Dorrit's lover with a hurried heart went up-stairs, and knocked with his knuckles at the Father's door.

"Come in, come in!" said a gracious voice. The Father's voice, her father's, the Marshalsea's father's. He was seated in his black

velvet cap, with his newspaper, three-and-sixpence accidentally left on the table, and two chairs arranged. Everything prepared for holding his Court.

"Ah, Young John! How do you do, how do you do?"

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir. I hope you are the same."

"Yes, John Chivery; yes. Nothing to complain of."

"I have taken the liberty, sir, of——"

"Eh?" The Father of the Marshalsea always lifted up his eyebrows at this point, and became amiably distraught and smilingly absent in mind.

"—A few cigars, sir."

"Oh!" (For the moment, excessively surprised.) Thank you, Young John, thank you. But really, I am afraid I am too— No? Well then, I will say no more about it. Put them on the mantel-shelf, if you please, Young John. And sit down, sit down. You are not a stranger, John.

"Thank you, sir, I am sure.—Miss;" here Young John turned the great hat round and round upon his left-hand, like a slowly twirling mouse-cage; "Miss Amy quite well, sir?"

"Yes, John, yes; very well. She is out."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes, John. Miss Amy is gone for an airing. My young people all go out a good deal. But at their time of life, it's natural, John."

"Very much so, I am sure, sir."

"An airing. An airing. Yes." He was blandly tapping his fingers on the table, and casting his eyes up at the window. "Amy has gone for an airing on the Iron Bridge. She has become quite partial to the Iron Bridge of late, and seems to like to walk there better than anywhere." He returned to conversation. "Your father is not on duty at present, I think, John?"

"No, sir, he comes on later in the afternoon." Another twirl of the great hat, and then Young John said, rising, "I am afraid I must wish you good day, sir."

"So soon? Good day, Young John. Nay, nay," with the utmost condescension, "never mind your glove, John. Shake hands with it on. You are no stranger here, you know."

Highly gratified by the kindness of his reception, Young John descended the staircase. On his way down he met some Collegians bringing up visitors to be presented, and at that moment Mr. Dorrit happened to call over the bannisters with particular distinctness, "Much obliged to you for your little testimonial, John!"

Little Dorrit's lover very soon laid down his penny on the toll-plate of the Iron Bridge, and came upon it looking about him for the well-known and well-beloved figure. At first he feared she was not there; but as he walked on towards the Middlesex side, he saw her standing still, looking at the water. She was absorbed in thought, and he wondered what she might be thinking about. There were the piles of city roofs and chimneys, more free from smoke than on week-days; and there were the distant masts and steeples. Perhaps she was thinking about them.

Little Dorrit mused so long, and was so entirely preoccupied, that although her lover stood quiet for what he thought was a long time, and twice or thrice retired and came back again to the former spot, still she did not move. So, in the end, he made up his mind to go on, and seem to come upon her casually in passing, and speak to her. The place was quiet, and now or never was the time to speak to her.

He walked on, and she did not appear to hear his steps until he was close upon her. When he said "Miss Dorrit!" she started and fell back from him, with an expression in her face of fright and something like dislike that caused him unutterable dismay. She had often avoided him before—always, indeed, for a long, long while. She had turned away and glided off, so often, when she had seen him coming towards her, that the unfortunate Young John could not think it accidental. But he had hoped that it might be shyness, her retiring character, her foreknowledge of the state of his heart, anything short of aversion. Now, that momentary look had said, "You, of all people! I would rather have seen any one on earth, than you!"

It was but a momentary look, inasmuch as she checked it, and said in her soft little voice, "Oh, Mr. John! Is it you?" But she felt what it had been, as he felt what it had been; and they stood looking at one another equally confused.

"Miss Amy, I am afraid I disturbed you by speaking to you."

"Yes, rather. I—I came here to be alone, and I thought I was."

"Miss Amy, I took the liberty of walking this way, because Mr. Dorrit chanced to mention, when I called upon him just now, that you——"

She caused him more dismay than before by suddenly murmuring, "O, father, father!" in a heart-rending tone, and turning her face away.

"Miss Amy, I hope I don't give you any uneasiness by naming Mr. Dorrit. I assure you I found him very well, and in the best of spirits, and he showed me even more than his usual kindness; being so very kind as to say that I was not a stranger there, and in all ways gratifying me very much."

To the inexpressible consternation of her lover, Little Dorrit, with her hands to her averted face, and rocking herself where she stood, as if she were in pain, murmured, "O, father, how can you! O dear, dear father, how can you, can you, do it!"

The poor fellow stood gazing at her, overflowing with sympathy, but not knowing what to make of this, until, having taken out her handkerchief and put it to her still averted face, she hurried away. At first he remained stock still; then hurried after her.

"Miss Amy, pray! Will you have the goodness to stop a moment. Miss Amy, if it comes to that, let *me* go. I shall go out of my senses, if I have to think that I have driven you away like this."

His trembling voice and unfeigned earnestness brought Little Dorrit to a stop. "O, I don't know what to do," she cried, "I don't know what to do!"

To Young John, who had never seen her bereft of her quiet self-command, who had seen her from her infancy ever so reliable and self-suppressed, there was a shock in her distress, and in having to associate himself with it as its cause, that shook him from his great hat to the

pavement. He felt it necessary to explain himself. He might be misunderstood—supposed to mean something, or to have done something, that had never entered into his imagination. He begged her to hear him explain himself, as the greatest favor she could show him."

"Miss Amy, I know very well that your family is far above mine. It were vain to conceal it. There never was a Chivery a gentleman that ever I heard of, and I will not commit the meanness of making a false representation on a subject so momentous. Miss Amy, I know very well that your high-souled brother, and likewise your spirited sister, spurn me from a height. What I have to do is to respect them, to wish to be admitted to their friendship, to look up at the eminence on which they are placed, from my lowlier station—for, whether viewed as tobacco or viewed as the lock, I well know it is lowly—and ever wish them well and happy."

There really was a genuineness in the poor fellow, and a contrast between the hardness of his hat and the softness of his heart (albeit, perhaps, of his head, too), that was moving. Little Dorrit entreated him to disparage neither himself nor his station, and, above all things, to divest himself of any idea that she supposed hers to be superior. This gave him a little comfort.

"Miss Amy," he then stammered, "I have had for a long time—ages they seem to me—Revolving ages—a heart-cherished wish to say something to you. May I say it?"

Little Dorrit involuntarily started from his side again, with the faintest shadow of her former look; conquering that, she went on at great speed half across the Bridge without replying:

"May I—Miss Amy, I but ask the question humbly—may I say it? I have been so unlucky already in giving you pain, without having any such intentions, before the holy Heavens! that there is no fear of my saying it unless I have your leave. I can be miserable alone, I can be cut up by myself; why should I also make miserable and cut up one, that I would fling myself off that parapet to give half a moment's joy to! Not that that's much to do, for I'd do it for twopence."

The mournfulness of his spirits, and the gorgeousness of his appearance, might have made him ridiculous, but that his delicacy made him respectable. Little Dorrit learnt from it what to do.

"If you please, John Chivery," she returned, trembling, but in a quiet way, "since you are so considerate as to ask me whether you shall say any more—if you please, no."

"Never, Miss Amy?"

"No, if you please. Never."

"Oh Lord!" gasped Young John.

"But perhaps, you will let me, instead, say something to you. I want to say it earnestly, and with as plain a meaning as it is possible to express. When you think of us, John—I mean my brother and sister, and me—don't think of us as being any different from the rest; for, whatever we once were (which I hardly know) we ceased to be long ago, and never can be any more. It will be much better for you, and much better for others, if you will do that, instead of what you are doing now."

Young John dolefully protested that he would try to bear it in mind, and would be heartily glad to do anything she wished.

"As to me," said Little Dorrit, "think as little of me as you can; the less, the better. When you think of me at all, John, let it only be as the child you have seen grow up in the prison, with one set of duties always occupying her; as a weak, retired, contented, unprotected girl. I particularly want you to remember, that when I come outside the gate, I am unprotected and solitary."

He would try to do anything she wished. But why did Miss Amy so much want him to remember that?

"Because," returned Little Dorrit, "I know I can then quite trust you not to forget to-day, and not to say any more to me. You are so generous that I know I can trust to you for that; and I do, and I always will. I am going to show you, at once, that I fully trust you. I like this place where we are speaking, better than any place I know; her slight color had faded, but her lover thought he saw it coming back just then; "and I may be often here. I know it is only necessary for me to tell you so, to be quite sure that you will never come here again in search of me. And I am—quite sure!"

She might rely upon it, said Young John. He was a miserable wretch, but her word was more than a law for him.

"And good bye, John," said Little Dorrit. "And I hope you will have a good wife one day, and be a happy man. I am sure you will deserve to be happy, and you will be, John."

As she held out her hand to him with these words, the heart that was under the waistcoat of sprigs—mere slop-work, if the truth must be known—swelled to the size of the heart of a gentleman; and the poor common little fellow having no room to hold it, burst into tears.

"O don't cry;" said Little Dorrit piteously. "Don't, don't! Good bye, John. God bless you!"

"Good bye, Miss Amy. Good bye!"

And so he left her: first observing that she sat down on the corner of a seat, and not only rested her little hand upon the rough wall, but laid her face against it too, as if her head were heavy, and her mind were sad.

It was an affecting illustration of the fallacy of human projects, to behold her lover with the great hat pulled over his eyes, the velvet collar turned up as if it rained, the plum-colored coat buttoned to conceal the silken waistcoat of golden sprigs, and the little direction-post pointing inexorably home, creeping along by the worst back-streets, and composing, as he went, the following new inscription for a tombstone in Saint George's Churchyard:

"Here lie the mortal remains of JOHN CHIVERY, Never anything worth mentioning, Who died about the end of the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, Of a broken heart, Requesting with his last breath that the word AMY might be inscribed over his ashes, Which was accordingly directed to be done, By his afflicted Parents."

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In actual price it is not higher, nor in use so expensive as any Oil sold as genuine by respectable chemists; whilst its active properties, more rapid effects, the smaller doses required, and its uniform purity and certainty of operation, render it far preferable and more really economical than that which is offered at the lowest price. This latter consideration is particularly worthy the attention of all who, from motives of apparent cheapness, may be induced inadvertently to recommend or purchase an inferior or spurious preparation.

Besides the means taken to ensure genuineness and superiority previous to exposure for sale, further to guard against subsequent admixture or adulteration, this Oil is sold in bottles only, capsuled and labelled with Dr. de Jongh's stamp and signature, in which state it is shipped to his Consignees. If purchased by the bottle, and the stamp and signature duly examined, the real Oil, in good condition, may be ensured; but care should be taken to attend to these marks, as well as to reject all offers of other Oils represented to be imported fresh from Norway, or of the same kind or quality, or equally efficacious.

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Professor at the University of London, Author of "The Elements of Materia Medica and Therapeutics," &c. &c.

"It was fitting that the author of the best analysis and investigations into the properties of this Oil should himself be the purveyor of this important medicine. I know that no one can be better, and few so well, acquainted with the physical and chemical properties of this medicine as yourself, whom I regard as the highest authority on the subject. The Oil which you gave me was of the very finest quality, whether considered with reference to its colour, flavour, or chemical properties; and I am satisfied that for medicinal purposes no finer Oil can be procured."

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Chief Analyst of the Sanitary Commission of the "Lancet," Author of "Food and its Alterations," &c. &c.

"I have more than once, at different times, subjected your Light-Brown Oil to chemical analysis—and this unknown to yourself—and I have always found it to be free from all impurity, and rich in the constituents of bile. So great is my confidence in the article, that I usually prescribe it in preference to any other, in order to make sure of obtaining the remedy in its purest and best condition."

HENRY LETHEBY, ESQ., M.B.,

Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology in the Medical College of the London Hospital, Medical Officer of Health to the City of London, &c. &c.

"I have frequently had occasion to analyse the Cod Liver Oil which is sold at your establishment. In all cases I have found it possessing the same set of properties, among which the presence of cholic compounds and of iodine in a state of organic combination are the most remarkable: in fact, the Oil corresponds in all its characters with that named 'Huile brune,' and described as the best variety in the masterly treatise of Dr. DE JONGH. It is, I believe, universally acknowledged that this description of Oil has great therapeutic power; and, from my investigations, I have no doubt of its being a pure and unadulterated article."

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Professor of Chemistry, King's College, Author of "Elements of Chemistry: Theoretical and Practical," &c. &c.

"The samples of the Oil examined were purchased by myself. I have no doubt that they are what they profess to be—genuine specimens of Cod Liver Oil, as they possess the composition of this substance, and exhibit in a marked degree the chemical characters by which this Oil is distinguished, and to which its medicinal qualities are attributed."

DR. SHERIDAN MUSPRATT, F.R.S.E., M.R.I.A.,

Founder and Principal of the Royal College of Chemistry, Liverpool; Author of "Chemistry applied to the Arts and Manufactures," &c. &c.

"Berzelius and other of the leading Chemists and Physicians of Europe having testimonialized in favour of your Oil, is a proof of its superiority over all the other kinds that are vended. I have submitted the Oil to the usual tests, and finding it to contain all the ingredients enumerated by you in your work, I have not the slightest hesitation in pronouncing it a genuine article, and one that is fully entitled to the confidence of the Medical Profession."

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Author of "The Spas of Germany," "The Spas of England," "On Sudden Death," &c. &c.

"Dr. Granville has used Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil extensively in his practice, and has found it not only efficacious, but uniform in its qualities. He has found that this particular kind produces the desired effect in a shorter time than others, and that it does not cause the nausea and indigestion too often consequent on the administration of the pale Newfoundland oils."

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"Dr. Tanner has employed Dr. de Jongh's Oil extensively, both in private and hospital practice, for some months past, having found that its medicinal powers are apparently greater than the ordinary Cod Liver Oil, that it creates less nausea, and that it is by no means unpalatable."

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Surgeon to the Western Dispensary for Diseases of the Skin, Author of "Practical Observations on certain Diseases of the Skin Generally pronounced intractable," &c. &c.

"I have now prescribed Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil in about one hundred and twenty cases of skin disease. It is bare justice to him to say that the success attending its use in Dispensary practice fully satisfies me that he has not exaggerated its value. In emaciated or strumous subjects this Oil is highly useful."

R. J. MANN, ESQ., M.D., M.R.C.S.E., F.R.A.S.,

Author of "The Philosophy of Reproduction," "Guide to the Knowledge of Life," &c. &c.

"I am of opinion that I have been able to place far more reliance upon always procuring a pure Oil from you than I have been able to reckon upon whilst looking to other sources of supply. In this respect, I think the profession is greatly indebted to the arrangements of Dr. de Jongh."

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Physician to H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha; Physician to the London City Mission; Physician to the Western Dispensary for Diseases of the Eye, &c. &c.

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1856.

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A SKETCH
OF THE
POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PAST
THREE YEARS,

IN CONNEXION WITH

The Press Newspaper,

AND

THE PART IT HAS TAKEN ON THE LEADING
QUESTIONS OF THE TIME.

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POLITICAL HISTORY

OF

THE PAST THREE YEARS.

THE state of Public Affairs at this moment is favourable to a calm review of the principal events which have occurred since the fall of Lord Derby's Administration. The Country is about to enter on a new Political Era. With the Close of the War the immediate consequences of the rule of the Coalition Cabinet may be summed up. To this date the existence of the PRESS NEWSPAPER has been identical with the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the Russian Quarrel; and it cannot be unbecoming for the PRESS to indicate the part it has taken at each stage of the struggle, and to tender its thanks to the Public for the large and generous support which has given influence to its Voice, and obtained for it an European Reputation.

It has happened that from the first announcement of the Menschikoff Mission until the virtual Conclusion of Peace, the PRESS has not only been able to give its readers the most Authentic Information on the state of affairs, but to anticipate events by its judgment, and to prescribe the Line of Policy which it was most for the honour and advantage of this country to pursue. Assailed by malignant inventions and unsparing abuse, the PRESS has never, even when it had to stand alone, swerved from the course which a sense of Duty dictated. It has constantly advocated the Policy which it believed most consistent with that pure Conservative Principle which is the first element of English Society, and the surest foundation of Order, Freedom, Progress, and National Prosperity.

The PRESS was called into existence by the indignant feeling consequent on that Coalition which, having overthrown Lord DERBY's Government, formed an Administration loudly extolled for its talent, but destitute of the Union which in the Politics of a Free Country can only be derived from Party, and of the Strength which in Representative Governments can only spring from Opinion.

In the first lines of the first number of the PRESS mention was made of the danger which lurked under "the tranquil and prosperous surface" of our political state. Its statements may now be read by the light of Subsequent Events. It said (May 21, 1853), "The premature return to office of Lord JOHN RUSSELL will probably end in destroying his character as a public man." On the following week it noticed the grave aspect of Turkish affairs, and exposed the causes which had led to the presumption of Russia. It had been the aim of Lord DERBY's Administration to maintain an intimate Alliance with the Government of France. The PRESS said (May 28, 1853):—

"So long as a cordial understanding existed between England and France, danger to the general tranquillity was impossible. England and France are the two policemen of Europe, and they can always keep the peace."

The Coalition Government had no sympathy with the French Alliance. Some of its leading members had declared their enmity to the Emperor of the French in the most open and insulting manner, while Lord ABERDEEN, faithful to past traditions, and to his old friendship with the Czar Nicholas, refused to recognise the danger which menaced the Peace of Europe, and clung to an alliance with the Absolute Monarchies of the Continent. On the 4th June, 1853, the PRESS wrote with emphasis,—"*The present prospect is, that war will break out,*" and it referred the evil to the disorganization of our Political State caused by the Coalition:—

"Had this country been governed by either of the great parties, by Lord John Russell or by Lord Derby, pledged alike to uphold the great principles of an external policy, on which our power depends, the designs of Russia would have been defeated."

While the PRESS endeavoured to rouse the Public to a sense of the real designs of Russia, and to show the necessity of prompt and decisive resistance to them, it quoted the language of Lord ABERDEEN's Foreign Secretary, Lord CLARENDON, as an evidence of either the simpleness or duplicity of the Coalition Cabinet. Lord CLARENDON said, on the 25th April, 1853, in the House of Lords:—

"The Emperor of Russia had practised no disguise whatever as to his intentions. * * * * * When that Sovereign gave his word as to what he was going to do, and what he was not going to do, he believed that the people of this country, as well as their Government, would place full reliance on it."

The PRESS then said, that Lord CLARENDON, with Lord ABERDEEN sitting by his side, "had deliberately made a statement which misled the British Parliament." While the Coalition Govern-

ment, and its newspaper organs continued to speak of the certainty of an amicable arrangement of the dispute between Russia and Turkey, the PRESS wrote decisively (June 18, 1853):—

“We are on the eve of great events. Europe is now disturbed, as she has been periodically disturbed, by the designs of Russia. When we denounce these designs, we do so because we believe, were they accomplished, they would be destructive of our own power, and ultimately of the independence, at least, of the Old World.”

When it was asserted that a negotiation was in progress which would settle the quarrel, the PRESS wrote with emphasis—“*The Emperor (Nicholas) will proceed.*” (PRESS, June 25, 1853.) On the following week it was prominently announced:—

“The Emperor of Russia has made a personal declaration to the English and French Ambassadors, expressed in the strongest language. He stated that even the destruction of his fleets should not prevent his invading Turkey, and obtaining the reparation which he believed to be his due. * * * The Emperor complains that the conduct of Lord Aberdeen is entirely at variance with the private declarations of that Minister.”—PRESS, July 2, 1853.

These declarations of the PRESS, all tending to show the real designs of Russia, and the necessity of this country preparing to resist them by Arms and by Alliances, were put forward at intervals of from eight to ten months previous to the Declaration of War. The warnings were disregarded—the country by the statements of Lords ABERDEEN and CLARENDON was lulled into a false security, the time which should have been spent in active preparation for War was lost in useless negotiation; and when hostilities could no longer be averted, our Government engaged in the contest in so feeble a manner as to raise a strong suspicion of its insincerity, and to cause, in spite of the most brilliant feats of valour ever performed by British troops, the most frightful disasters and losses which our armies ever sustained, and to create an impression that the military genius and prowess of England had departed.

While the Coalition Government continued, in the words of the PRESS, its “timid and tortuous course,” while it endeavoured to propitiate Russia by concession, and to shrink from the decisive action recommended by France, the PRESS never ceased to expose the peril of this odious policy, and to declare that England should boldly face the growing danger, and prepare for War, either to avert its necessity, or to meet it with Irresistible Power. For months the PRESS insisted on this view—though struggling, as it wrote, “against the misrepresentations of a powerful press.” When the public were assured that the Turkish question was “merely a question of words,” the PRESS asserted (September 17, 1853,) 62

that it was "to the armies on the banks of the Danube that attention must be directed;" and it was the first to announce—its statement being contradicted by Ministerial journals, though subsequently proved to be correct—that the part of Russia was "definitively taken, and that that part is *"La Guerre."*—PRESS, December 3, 1853.

When War was declared, four months later, the PRESS affirmed that only disaster could ensue from the manner in which it was undertaken. It contrasted the language of the Ministers with their conduct:—"They talked as if we were at war, and acted as if we were at peace." The Coalition Cabinet clung to its pacific policy after it was evident that the Sword alone could decide the contest. Lord ABERDEEN spoke in a pacific sense, at the Aberdeen Banquet, in October, 1854, and again at the Lord Mayor's Dinner, on the 9th November following. He said that he had clung to peace with "desperate tenacity;" that "the policy of Her Majesty's Government was a policy of peace;" and he controverted "the opinion of many," that "these pacific efforts had been too long protracted." Commenting on the speech of the 8th of November, the PRESS wrote:—

On the conduct of this war must depend the question, whether forty years of social and political change have impaired our spirit, or weakened our arm. It is a reflexion to excite some misgiving that our destiny is at present in the hands of a Ministry totally destitute of English spirit. A Government reflecting the high principles and sentiments of the national character would shake the power of the Emperor Nicholas more than any defeat inflicted by our arms."—PRESS, November 11, 1854.

The "misgiving" of the PRESS was soon to be fatally justified by events. The delay, of which Lord ABERDEEN boasted, proved the destruction of our army in the Crimea, and the PRESS had soon afterwards to record the frantic terror with which the expedition to the Crimea was proclaimed to be "a leap in the dark;" and to denounce, while celebrating the invincible valour of our troops at Inkermann, the incapacity or worse, which left the soldiers who had gained the most splendid victory in our annals since Agincourt, to perish miserably from cold, famine, and every species of privation:—

"Unhappy England! that the very glory of her soldiers is the shame of her statesmen; unhappy, that in every one of the facts which make the victory a marvel and a miracle, is a damning charge against those who sent forth the expedition. The army was miserably weak to contend against the enormous force of the enemy. It did contend in the face of these fearful odds and vanquished—hence the glory, but why were its numbers so few! . . . In the meantime our soldiers, under the watchful eye of a practical Government, are shivering in the Euxine breezes, starving with miserable rations, and sickening in presence of medical assistance of so limited a character, that it is little more

than a cruel mockery. May Heaven preserve the brave fellows who have withstood the Russians, but who have yet to withstand the Coalition."

The disasters of that Winter in the Crimea are now known to all the world. Of our entire force 35 per cent. died miserably from privation. While the blame of the calamity was endeavoured to be cast on subordinates, the PRESS declared its real cause—no provision had been made for Wintering the Army in the place where it was compelled to winter. This was decisively proved by the evidence of the Duke of NEWCASTLE himself before the Committee of Inquiry, quoted in the PRESS of April 28, 1855. His Grace said :—

"I conceived either the army would find winter quarters in the town of Sebastopol, or in the south of the Crimea ; or if Sebastopol were not taken that it would winter on the shores of the Bosphorus, and I provided for both contingencies.

"CHAIRMAN.—Did you provide for the contingency of Sebastopol not being taken, which is the contingency which has happened ?

"The Duke of NEWCASTLE.—NO."

From the Duke of NEWCASTLE'S own lips, came a confirmation of the charges of mismanagement, which the PRESS had advanced ; and while the cause of all the calamity that our army had sustained was thus laid bare, it was cruel injustice to throw on officers and officials at the seat of war, placed in a most difficult and dangerous position, the onus of disasters it was impossible for them to prevent.

When Parliament met in December, 1854, the Foreign Enlistment Bill was opposed by the PRESS, on the ground that it would not, and could not, afford that Prompt Reinforcement which was urgently required. The measure was carried notwithstanding the arguments that it might embroil us with neutral nations, and that it must be inefficient for a considerable time. Considering the inadequacy of the Government measures to meet the emergencies of the crisis, the PRESS wrote December 16, 1854 :—

"The country demands with an unanimity scarcely ever exhibited before, that the war shall be energetically conducted, and these bills are the answer returned to it. The Ministers have had warning, they have had time, they have had trust. The nation as one man has pressed upon them powers, supplies, resources of all kinds—it has overwhelmed them with voluntary offerings even—it has besought them to take more money and more men—to do all that the Government of a mighty empire could to secure our army in the Crimea, to bring the contest there to a glorious issue, and to wage the war on a scale which should save England and the world from the horrors of a protracted contest. Day by day the voice of public opinion has been thundered in their ears. They have listened, they have promised, and we have now their acts before us. There is a limit to forbearance, and that limit has been past. The Cabinet or the country must fall. Which shall it be ?"

The question was soon answered by Parliament. When it assem-

bled in January, the proofs of Ministerial incapacity had become overwhelming. A Committee of Inquiry was carried by the largest majority that ever on a vital question decided against an Administration, and the Coalition Cabinet fell.

Of the causes and character of the Coalition, the PRESS spoke with perfect frankness in its first number :—

"Why has the constitutional habit of the realm been disturbed and discontinued? Why is the country governed neither by the Liberal nor the Conservative party? From personal and petty causes only. The Chancellor of the Exchequer professing high Conservative opinions will not, from a personal feeling, combine with the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. The morbid vanity of Woburn Abbey must be represented without an interval in the royal councils. The Whigs may perish, but the Duke of Bedford must be satisfied. To accomplish these noble ends—to gratify a prejudice and to pander to an oligarch, an austere intriguer without any following in the country, and without any lustre of career, is installed in the high place. Around him are clustered a motley crew of statesmen, who, magnanimously forgetting careers of recrimination, and veiling their mutual aversion with sinister frankness and affected cordiality, devote their heterogeneous energies to the service of a perplexed sovereign and an amazed country."—PRESS May 7, 1853.

From such a combination, the PRESS anticipated disaster, but it was impossible to anticipate that the disaster would be so sudden and so great. The Coalition held office for fourteen months. In that period they contrived to derange the national finances,—to plunge the country into war, to destroy an army, and to create an impression that the country had neither National Feeling nor Administrative Skill, neither vigour to cope with the enemy, nor strength to cast off the shackles of Corruption and Routine.

The career of the Coalition has already passed from the scope of political passion to the sphere of history. It can be surveyed with calmness. Lord ABERDEEN's Government was consistently opposed by the PRESS, from a knowledge that the vice of its constitution must prove pernicious to the country. No Government ever took office under happier auspices,—none ever left office in deeper disgrace. Time has revealed the infamy of the agents employed to form the Coalition. The names of STONOR, O'FLAHERTY, and SADLEIR, are now well known to the Public. The disclosures of the PRESS (March 1, 8, 15, and 22, 1856,) on the SADLEIR case have been received with astonishment :—

"It is only now that the public can be made thoroughly aware of the detestable character of the Irish intrigue, which caused the sudden termination of Lord Derby's Cabinet. So dark a passage is not to be found in the politics of the last hundred years. We shall, aided by the revelations of John Sadleir, place upon record facts not to be forgotten. Parliamentary history, interleaved with the Newgate Calendar, is a literary legacy bequeathed by the Coalition Cabinet."—PRESS, March 1, 1856.

When the Coalition Cabinet was broken up, the PRESS gave exact and authentic details of the various attempts made to form a new Ministry. When Lord DERBY was called on by the Queen to form a Government, he solicited the assistance of Lord PALMERSTON. At that time the country would gladly have seen the chief direction of affairs in the hands of Lord DERBY, Lord ELLENBOROUGH, Lord PALMERSTON, and Mr. DISRAELI. A strong and efficient Government was the great want of the time, and this combination would have afforded it. Lord PALMERSTON encouraged the arrangement for a moment, that he might disconcert it by an intrigue. The result was recorded in the PRESS of February 10, 1855:—

“On Tuesday the Palmerston Cabinet was formed—that is to say, the Cabinet of 1853, condemned by an overwhelming majority of the House of Commons, returned to office, with the absence of two individuals who had been Prime Ministers of England, and to reconcile whose rival ambitions the Coalition was constructed. All has been happily arranged: the House of Commons is to support the Government which it has condemned; Lord Aberdeen is to be rewarded for the Crimean Expedition, by being made a Knight of the Garter; Mr. Sidney Herbert is to be recompensed for his successful labours at the War-Office by being appointed Secretary of State; and Lord Palmerston kisses hands as Prime Minister, because, at a moment of national peril, he has prevented the formation of a strong Government.”

The Government was no sooner formed than it was disorganized. Three of its most eminent members withdrew, conceiving that they had been deceived by Lord PALMERSTON, and Lord JOHN RUSSELL again resumed his place in the Cabinet.

Of all the Coalition Ministers Lord JOHN RUSSELL left office with the fairest character. He had declared that he could not resist a Committee of Inquiry, and he preferred rather to resign than to oppose the motion. He reserved himself for deeper disgrace. At the Vienna Conference, he promised to use all his influence with his Cabinet to induce it to accept the last proposals of Austria for creating an equilibrium in the Black Sea, by maintaining there a French and English squadron equivalent to the Russian navy. Had he abided by his resolve, and, like the French Plenipotentiary, have resigned when it was rejected, no one would have questioned his integrity, whatever might have been thought of his judgment. But he chose a different part:—

“Defeated, Lord John determined not only to remain in the Cabinet, but to conceal the part he had played under an assumption of warlike ardour. Hardly had he ceased his urgent advocacy for peace with Russia, than he rose in the Commons (May 24) to denounce the unscrupulous ambition of that Power, all his observations being directed to show that there could be no security for peace but in her material humiliation. Indignation is sometimes expressed at the license of counsel who lend their tongues and talent for a fee; *their* profession is understood, and it is recognised that they stand in place of their clients.

But what is to be said of the license of a statesman in the position of Lord John Russell, who prostitutes his character that he may obtain a momentary advantage in political warfare? His speech of the 24th of May, read in the light of that explanation, wrung from him on the 6th of July, is one long tissue of the meanest subterfuge. Lord Palmerston favoured the deception. He intimated that Lord John, like himself, was resolved to be content with nothing less than a limitation of the Russian fleet. "Turkey is exposed," he said, "as my noble friend (Lord John Russell) has stated, to a standing danger; and the existence of that fleet is a standing menace to Turkey." How adroit! What a spectacle to be witnessed! The Ministers of a great country converting themselves into professors of legerdemain, and competing which could best cheat the senses of their hearers, by conveying to them false impressions."—PRESS, July 14, 1855.

The question of Peace was soon to assume a more practical shape. Sebastopol fell a prize to the Courage and Constancy of the Allied Arms, on the 8th of September. When the rejoicings consequent on so great a success had ceased, men began to reason on its political significance. Would it be the prelude to new combats, or would it tend to close the war? It was this question which the PRESS undertook to discuss on the 29th of September last—three weeks after the fall of Sebastopol—and of this question it has never lost sight until the authoritative announcement was published that Peace was in reality concluded.

What was the political significance of the fall of Sebastopol? According to the reasoning of the PRESS, that great defeat of Russia, and that great success of the Allies ought—if the belligerents were accessible to reason—to decide the question of superiority of force, and with that decision to solve all the points in dispute. The PRESS regarded the operations before Sebastopol not as a siege merely, but as a complete war:—

"It is a narrow view of the Sebastopol struggle to regard it as little more than the attack and capture of a single town. In the year there have been comprised all the incidents of a lengthened war: many desperate battles, innumerable skirmishes, and such bombardments as exceed in magnitude the fire of all the sieges in the Peninsular war put together. Are we still to fight for *prestige*? What future victories can surpass the immortal laurels won at Alma and Inkermann? If our part in the later acts of the war has been less glorious than in its opening ones, it has been only because our soldiers were at first so generously prodigal of their blood that less was left of it to shed."—PRESS, Oct. 6.

This view was enforced in other passages:—

"The attack of Russia on Turkey was grossly aggressive. It has been beaten back and severely chastised. With the removal of the causes of war, the war itself should cease. Some period there must always be in every war, when peace is felt to be practicable, or wars would be eternal. Has not such a period now arrived? Sebastopol has fallen, the Euxine fleet has been destroyed, the coasts of Russia both in the Black Sea and the Baltic have been ravaged almost unresistingly by the allied navies, and the powerlessness of Russian arms for aggressive warfare has been decisively established."—PRESS, Oct. 20.

It was argued that Russia must, according to all probability, be disposed to Peace by experience of the superior force arrayed against her :—

“If we set aside all ideas of justice and principle—if we look upon policy only as we do upon chess—Russia cannot fail to perceive that she is playing, and must as long as the war lasts play, a losing game. The fact is, that the alliance of the Western Powers is too strong for her to cope with,—she would not be a match for either France or England singly. Attacked by both, she is certain to be defeated wherever she is assailable. What need is there of a thousand trials to decide a principle when one suffices? It is the part of political wisdom to estimate forces, and to yield when resistance would be not only impracticable but disastrous. In Homer, the balance of Jove decided the battle before it began, or while it was in suspense. Heroes withdrew from the field in mid-fight, when they recognised his will. Is Russia so destitute of political foresight that she cannot look up, mark the poise of the beam, and yield herself to a destiny she has not power to resist.”—PRESS, Oct. 27.

These passages will suffice to show the line of reasoning pursued by the PRESS. It argued that the Fall of Sebastopol ought to conclude the War, supposing that Russia were accessible to reason, and that the Allies adhered to the objects for which they took up arms. And the PRESS supposed that the publication of these sentiments in a Conservative Organ, might have some weight in disposing the Belligerents to consider whether Peace was not practicable.

Nor did the PRESS speak without Authoritative Information of what was passing in Continental Courts. It knew that all the Great Statesmen of Europe were disposed to Peace, that they regarded the Fall of Sebastopol as removing the main obstacle opposed to it, and that they waited for some encouragement to endeavour to find Terms of Accommodation.

But no sooner had the PRESS declared its views than it was assailed by a storm of calumnious reproach. It was said to be the mouth-piece of a new coalition, in which Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Bright, were to be the chief actors. It would have been absurd to contradict all the reports set afloat by the novel fact of an English Journal putting forth original views on the great question of the day, and advocating a Policy of Principle. No one seriously believed that the PRESS was acting under “Russian inspiration,” or that its columns were at the service of either Mr. Gladstone or the Manchester party. The PRESS only laughed at its assailants, and playfully described the effect which the report of the New Coalition would be likely to have on Mr. Bright.*

To the charge that the PRESS, by advocating Pacific Views, was affording encouragement to Russia to prolong the contest, the reply was made, that the War had reached a point when the objects

* Narrative of the Frenzy of Mr. John Bright. See page 15.

for which the Allies took up arms must be conceded, or that it must assume a new aspect, and take a wider range than at first had been contemplated. If Russia, after the reverses she had sustained, refused to listen to such terms as were essential to the security of the Turkish territory, the Allies would have no course open to them but to continue the War for the reduction of Russian Power in the South of Europe, and for obtaining by force of arms and occupation of territory those securities against Russian aggression, which the Court of St. Petersburg obstinately refused to yield. This view was stated in the Press in no uncertain language :—

“If the war must last, it will be sound policy to prosecute it, not on a reduced, but on an extended scale. England must have an army of one hundred thousand men in the field. She maintained this force when she was much less powerful than she is at present, and she must do so again, if she is to be a principal in a continental war, and if she is to maintain her influence in the East.”—PRESS, Oct. 13.

“The Conservative party, hopeful for the fortunes of their country, confident of its might, proud of its glories, jealous of its reputation, will not stay their hands from any work, how arduous soever, which they find to be NECESSARY. . . . Should a spirit of moderation animate the councils of the Allies until it be no longer possible to be retained, the justice of the mortal strife in which they finally close with their foe, will be more clearly vindicated to the world, and animate the two most valiant, enterprising, and ingenious races of the earth to unflinchingly pursue their colossal work, and cheerfully bear all the sacrifices it must entail upon them.”—PRESS, November 3.

These passages are adduced to show how false was the charge that the PRESS advocated a policy of submission to Russia. The idea of the PRESS was, that the war was undertaken not to *conquer* but to *restrain* Russia; that the great Northern Power had its place in the European system, and that the object of the Western Alliance was to define that place, and to keep Russia strictly within it.

This was the view of the PRESS when the aggressive demands of Russia were first made known ; it was the view of the PRESS when Lord Aberdeen’s cabinet hesitated as to the course it should pursue ; it was the view of the PRESS through the whole course of the War ; and it was in consistency with that view that the PRESS supposed the Fall of Sebastopol to mark a period when the purpose of restraint could be accomplished, and the position of Russia in the South, and her relations with Turkey, be defined, limited, and for ever established.

It is not for the PRESS to say what influence its articles had in disposing men’s minds both in this country and the Continent towards a Pacific Settlement. The only points to be decided are—Were its views wise and just ? Was it politic to put them forth ?

When the PRESS frankly declared its sentiments on the 29th of

September, the most influential organs of opinion in this country were endeavouring to give to the War a new direction. They declared that it was to be a War of Principles and of Retribution—that it must be carried forward to the extent of subverting the whole Continental system, and of effecting a Radical Change in the Distribution of European Power. The PRESS replied, that if such a contest were to be engaged in, it would be one of the most lengthened and desperate on record; while, on the other hand, if the contest were to be concluded by the Solution of the Questions out of which it arose, it would establish the great and beneficent principle that Wars might be confined to the objects for which they were undertaken, and might be concluded rather by the Opinion of Nations leaning to the side of Right than by the preponderance, in the first instance, of Physical Force. The War began by Turkey being most unequally opposed to Russia, but the Public Opinion of Europe leant to the side of the weaker Power, and Russia at last acknowledged that she yielded to the growing strength of the Opinion banded against her.

For ten weeks the PRESS had to contend against a representation which it knew to be false, but which it could not contradict in express terms. It was said that the views of the PRESS if acted on, would weaken or dissolve the French Alliance. The PRESS at the time well knew that if the views of its assailants were acted on, and it was decided to make the war a War of Extremity, it would be impossible to carry the French nation with us, and that England would have to fight the battle for the destruction of Russia alone. In the PRESS of November 17, it was announced that the Question of Peace had been “considered by the Emperor of the French, and had been by him pressed on the attention of the English Government.” This announcement was received in silence, or with impertinent denial. The PRESS pointed to the speech of the Emperor of the French on closing the Exposition at Paris as an evidence of his pacific views. It was replied that that speech pointed only to an extension of the war.

On the 24th November, the PRESS stated prominently that proposals of Peace had been communicated from the Court of St. Petersburg “to the Emperor of the French, and the Emperor, in introducing them to the consideration of her Majesty’s Government, has declared his opinion that the contemplated terms are satisfactory, and that the spirit in which they are offered by Russia is sincere.” To the evasive contradiction which this announcement drew forth, the PRESS on the following week intimated that

Austria was the medium for communicating these proposals to the French Court. The secrets of Diplomacy are often long concealed. It has not yet been acknowledged that Russia was the first to move the Court of Vienna to Pacific Negotiation. But when the whole truth is known, it will be found that the statements of the PRESS were accurate in every particular.

At length, some weeks after the statements in the PRESS, the fact that a negotiation was in progress, was acknowledged by the Ministerial Journals, but it was contended that the negotiation was a formality, and would come to nothing. The PRESS replied that it was a reality, and that it would probably result in the establishment of Peace.

In the PRESS of January 12, 1856, five days before the definitive answer of Russia was known, and when it was generally stated that that answer would be adverse, the PRESS stated authoritatively—"The Prospects of Peace are favourable." When the acceptance of Russia was officially declared, January 17, and our leading journals indicated that no great importance should be attached to it, the PRESS wrote :—

"There will be a period of delay before a Treaty of Peace can be formally declared, but the Public must not be deceived. Peace is already established. On this head all the Governments concerned are thoroughly agreed. There may be difficulties, but they will be overcome. Peace is resolved on."—PRESS, January 19.

Can it be denied that the present state of affairs bears testimony to the accuracy of this view ?

The PRESS was commenced with a view of placing before its readers the most Authentic Information on all subjects of political importance, and of maintaining the Conservative Interests of the Empire, by sound views on questions of the time, as they arose. For its articles to be really useful, it was necessary that they should be independent,—that they should present to the Conservative community, not the advocacy of a hired pen,—but the views of thoroughly Conservative Principle, and the counsels of Disinterested Thought. A reference to the past columns of the PRESS is sufficient to show the extent and accuracy of its information on subjects of the highest interest. How far it has been at once Conservative and National in its sentiments on leading public questions, and particularly on that Settlement of Europe now accomplished, the Public must be left to decide. The PRESS advocated Peace, but a Peace which should be safe, just, and honourable ;—which should raise a lasting barrier to Russian aggression ; and justify, by the Wisdom of its Provisions,

the sacrifices which had been made to obtain it. The PRESS believes that this Country must be most prosperous when under the guidance of Enlightened Conservative Opinion, and to clear, to extend, and to invigorate that Opinion, will continue to be, as it has been, the object of its most Earnest Effort.

NARRATIVE OF THE FRENZY OF JOHN BRIGHT.

(AFTER SWIFT.)

(From THE PRESS of October 20, 1855.)

THESE things, Christian reader, were communicated to me, being at Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, on affairs, by one Obadiah Fleshpots, a friend of the unhappy person whose malady is hereinafter depicted. They are set down, not for the mortification of this man, or this, which malicious interpretation may be put upon my narration by the malignant, but for a threefold end—viz., *imprimis*, that we may note to what lying and forgery unrighteous men will descend when egged on by the Tempter; *secundo*, that the rottenness of such mendacious practices may be fully exposed and laid bare; and *tertio*, that all of humane disposition may lend their pity and commiseration; as the heathen poet saith, *miseris succurrere disco*.

Coming into my bed-room at the Grub Inn, Shoddy Lane, where I was making up my accounts, as a commercial gent is bound to do at nightfall, the said Obadiah, of whom I had knowledge, for we were once fellow shopmen, did approach my table something hastily, and with no by your leave did drink up certain rum and water. Then, sitting down upon my bed, and saluting me by the familiar title of Old Cock (my name is Peter Druggett), instigated me to order two more sixes, hot. This done, he narrated to me that John Bright, our acquaintance, of late somewhat estranged (being wealthy and noted) was strangely troubled in mind.

Obadiah Fleshpots enlarged to me, after, how that the said Bright had until within the last fortnight been a shrewd and keen man of business, loud and self-complacent, but not unkindly disposed towards them who submitted to him. But that something which he had read in a diurnal, called the *Times*, had utterly overturned and routed him. To my demand what was this writing which had been so hurtful, Obadiah replied that he had not seen it, but that he had heard it was a declaration that three men had sworn an eternal friendship and brotherhood, and that they would overthrow the Queen's Majesty's Government, enter together into office, and make peace with the Czar of Russia. That these three men were declared by the said *Times* to be the said Bright, the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, and the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone.

Hereat I shouted, with some contumely, the falsehood and impossibility of such a union being apparent to any rational man. But Fleshpots shook his head, and declared it was no jesting matter. Composing myself, therefore, I heard as follows:—

That on the said Bright reading the statement in question, he danced round the room eight times, to the confusion of his family, who, with himself, belong to a religious society to whom all dancing is abhorrent.

That, proceeding from bad to worse (for *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*), he cried with a loud voice that he would be blown if he wouldn't be Premier by First Month. Swearing being still more contradictory to his tenets than dancing, his family were inexpressibly shocked, rushed from his presence, and sent for several noted members of his sect, to whom he behaved in a most unbecoming manner, offering to bet them new broadbrims that he was made a Lord by Third Month in the new year, and proposing to fight them for farthings. Having thus, in one brief hour, committed dancing, swearing, gambling, and fighting, he became calmer, and kicked them all out of the house.

He then set to work to qualify himself for the Coalition which he supposed

was to take place, and began by reading one of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, which occupied him seven hours. At the end of that time he obtained a Latin grammar belonging to a young member of his family, and, declaring that he also must make classical speeches, committed to his memory (which is excellent, when he likes) several gerunds and supines, and the three concords, which he asserted would come in well in a peace speech. He also learned the *proprid quæ maribus tribuuntur*. His servant-maid then coming in to demand what he would like for dinner—for the Friends, or Quakers, do understand good living—he said that he should like three courses to be before him. Further imitating Mr. Gladstone, he said that the servant-maid's demand was inexact, for that there was a difference between what a person liked and what he could have, but that if he conceded to her, that she was prepared to place upon the table that which he should select, he was next prompted to ask himself what was in season, and a reply to this entailed the necessity of possessing certain information which he made it an instruction to her to obtain from the tradesmen who supplied the mansion with edibles. The servant, unaccustomed to be so addressed, immediately gave warning.

Next, remembering that he was to take office with an individual who had distinguished himself as an author, the said John Bright sent to his bookseller for the whole of Mr. Disraeli's works. This tradesman, being also of the Quaker persuasion, conceived that such a demand, professing to come from the said Bright, was an attempt at swindling, and incontinently gave the messenger in charge of the Manchester police, in whose keeping the poor soul, Obadiah said, still remained. In the meantime the said Bright declared that he too would write some novels and romances which should take the shine, as he phrased it, out of everybody, and he sat up until the middle of the night, writing a political tale, in which the heroine, being the wife of a dandy M.P., who got tipsy on the night of an important debate, dressed herself in her husband's clothes, put on a moustache, and, easily passing for her effeminate lord, took her seat in the House, but, being worked upon by the impassioned oratory of a celebrated Quaker member (very carefully and favourably described), threw herself into his arms, sobbing and crying, to the great scandal of the Speaker and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

On the proximate day the said Bright's bewilderment at the unexpected tidings took another turn, and he insisted upon holding a levée, at which all the magnates of Manchester were summoned to attend and kiss his hand; whereto some of them demurring, he went round to their houses and punched their heads, severally and respectively, he being, as is well known, of pugilistic tendencies.

Then he wrote letters to the said Gladstone and Disraeli, to their utter mystification, promising to stand by them like a good one, and asking how they thought the great offices of State should be distributed, adding that, "something must be done for poor dear Cobby"—by which he was supposed to mean Mr. Cobden, M.P., one of his dependents. The said Gladstone and Disraeli each returned him a soothing answer, and wrote privately to his friends advising a strait-waistcoat.

His last freak was writing to Sir Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament, ordering him to make a separate seat, with arms to it, on the Treasury bench, for him, Bright, and threatening to hang him (though generally opposed to capital punishments) in case of default.

But some well-wisher (he has several) having sent him a copy of a Conservative paper in which the whole statement of the *Times* was explained to be utterly unfounded, or rather to have been founded on some joke in an Irish paper, malevolently expanded into a story, he burst into a great rage, exclaimed that he had always said that all newspapers (except a few under his own thumb) ought to be put down, and went off to meeting.

Obadiah Fleshpots having concluded his statement, I gave him some more rum and water, and hastened to pen down these particulars for the reasons I have above stated, and which I leave to the favourable consideration of the charitably-minded.

P. D.

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